

NORTHWESTERN

November 1997

LUTHERAN



The care of
God's children

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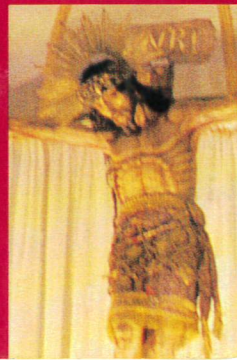
Armchair
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Good works
are the fruits
of faith

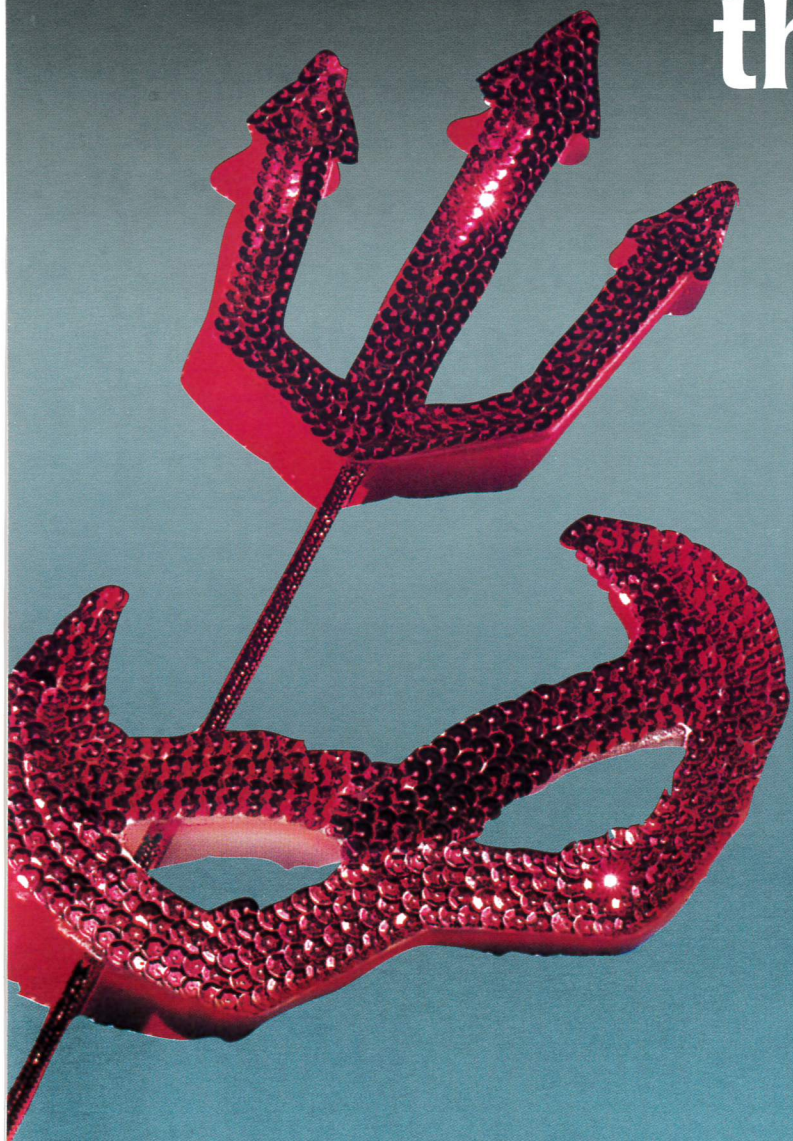
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A spiritual struggle page 14

There's more to those *cute little devils* than you might think!



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ANGELS AND DEMONS

by *John D. Schuetze*

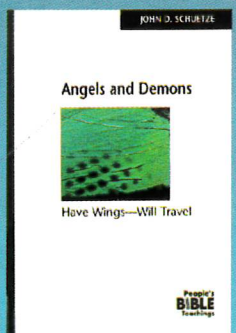
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More like that Samaritan

Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Luke 17:17,18

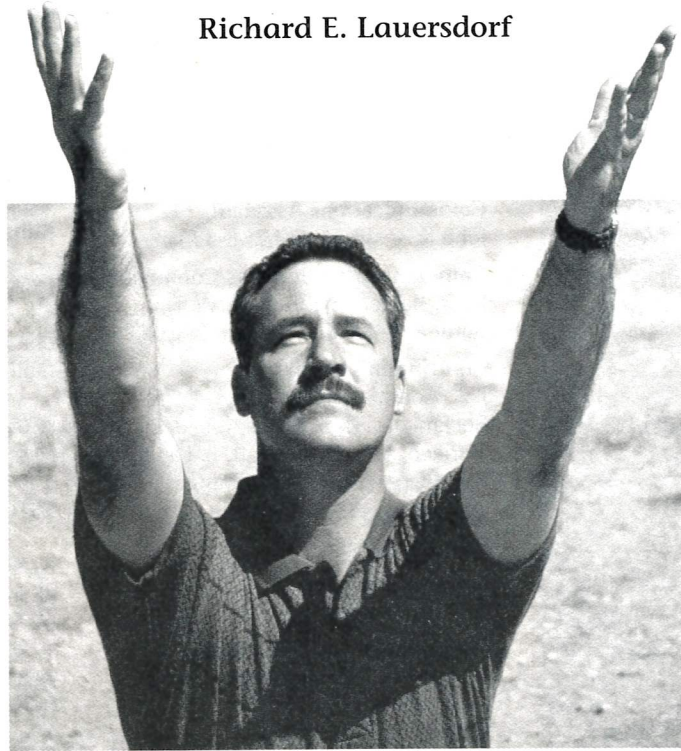
Richard E. Lauersdorf

He failed to leave his autograph so we don't know his name. He was not like the other nine, but an outsider. Yet the more we become like him the better our Thanksgiving will be. God, make us more like that Samaritan.

In help received

All 10 lepers received physical help from Jesus. So have we. From our God have come the loved ones who double our joys and divide our sorrows. Children and grandchildren, though they bring work and concern, offer joy and fulfillment. A country with freedoms of religion, speech, travel, and a standard of living others envy. The guileless smile on a child's face, the good feeling when we take our shoes off after a hard day, the luscious taste of an ice cream sundae, the relief from pain that has just passed, the sink full of dirty dishes that reminds us that we live well while others hurt. On and on the list could stretch. But to stop with such a list would make us less than that Samaritan in our thanksgiving.

He received the best from Jesus—a Savior. So have we. The Savior is a gift all can share equally and abundantly. From Jesus' nail pierced hands come the same riches for each of us. Forgiveness for every sin is there for the penitent, regardless of what it is or how often it has



trapped us. Strength in weakness of body and soul, comfort in sorrow, help when helpless, are there for the needy. Sweet peace with God and sure hope for heaven are there for those whose faith is built on Jesus' blood and righteousness. All this and more our Savior gives each of us in his Word and sacraments. Compared to these treasures, the rest are mere crumbs from the Master's table.

The more we look at what has been given us in Christ the more we will be ready to offer him our praises, just like that Samaritan.

In praise indeed

Why didn't the other nine join the Samaritan? Was it that they became so absorbed in the health they could again enjoy, the wife they could again embrace, the work they could

again do, that they forgot about the giver? Could be. That happens to us more than we care to admit. Was it that they thought they had it coming as members of God's chosen people? Could be. That happens to us when we think God is only giving us what we deserve or that all we have has come because of our efforts. So pass the turkey while we make only a faint stab at giving thanks where it belongs.

We need to look at that Samaritan and then at ourselves. Days like Thanksgiving are very much in order, but very much out of order if that's where praising

God begins and ends.

Needed are people who walk down the streets of daily life and let their thanksgiving show. Needed are spouses who care for each other, parents who train their children's souls, children who honor their parents. Needed are workers who witness with word and deed in the office and at the plant. Needed are members who bring their offering and use their talents for the kingdom work their Savior sets before them. Needed are believers who daily join that Samaritan at Jesus' feet in giving him praise indeed.

God make us more like that Samaritan!

Richard E. Lauersdorf is the synod's Vice President of Mission and Ministry.



- Our Thanksgiving articles this year put a different spin on this holiday designed for the sole purpose of being thankful. See “**More like that Samaritan**” (p. 3) and “**Thanksgiving for nothing**” (back cover).
- We know that faith alone saves—not our works. Yet, two authors remind us that a living faith is active—complacency is unacceptable. Turn to “**Armchair Christianity**” (p. 12). Be sure to read “**Good works are the fruits of faith**” (p. 32).
- This month Wayne Mueller ends his series on Christian family planning. We thank him for reminding us of the Savior’s promises.
- Finally, this Thanksgiving, we thank you for subscribing to NL. And while we’re grateful for all of our subscribers, we’d like to have lots more to be thankful for.

So this fall we’ve been running a promotional program with two purposes. One is (obviously) to gain more subscribers. The second (equally important) is to offer tips to make NL more practical for you, our current subscriber.

Information was mailed to every pastor, congregation president, and principal. Ask them for the materials and help us get the Word of God out to as many people as possible.

—LRB

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Photography

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The care of God's children

The same Lord who created the entire universe is the same Lord who cares for you—personally.

John M. Parlow



Thousands of cars are stolen every year in California, but a few years ago one car theft made all the papers and was the lead story on the news. The police issued an all-points bulletin to find the missing car and contact the person who stole it. Why was this “undeserving” car theft getting so much attention?

The owner of the stolen car informed the police that on the front seat was a box of crackers laced with a deadly poison. The car owner had planned to use the crackers as rat bait. So the police were desperately trying to find the thief—not so much to punish him, but to save his life. They were afraid he would eat the crackers and die.

In the same way, our Heavenly Father pursues us—people who are also in that undeserving category because of our sin. Despite that, he has reached out to save us. Now through faith in Jesus we are not considered sinful criminals on the run from a holy God, but God's children who are protected and cared for by his loving hand. Jesus now reminds us of the care of each one of God's children.

Warnings

As Jesus teaches the disciples about caring for one another as God's children, the Lord first states the rule and then the reasons for the rule. “See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in

heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven” (Matthew 18:10). Jesus issues a warning, “See that you do not look down on . . .” In essence Jesus says, “Be careful that you don't do this.” Jesus had already made clear the seriousness of mistreating any of God's little ones: it would be better for that person to have “a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea” (v. 6). Now he continues, “Be warned. You should never ever look down on one of these little ones as if he were without value.”

Every true believer—no matter how young, immature, unattractive, or deprived—is one with Jesus Christ.

The world does this. The world looks down on Christians. We make people nervous because we believe there is right and wrong; we even use the “s” word—sin. We teach that the road to heaven is a narrow path that leads only through Jesus, not the politically correct highway of universalism.

It is enough that the world considers Christians worthless, odd, and ignorant. But, Jesus says, it is not acceptable for Christians to look at each other that way. Still we do. Christians sin by looking down on

each other in different ways. We need to be honest about that because we are good at criticizing, good at laughing at people's foibles and weaknesses, good at ridiculing their failures.

Christians look down on one another when they show partiality. God loves and cares for his children equally. God doesn't show partiality. Remember what Peter said, "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right" (Acts 10:34,35).

But sometimes we are guilty of partiality. Churches try to gain the prominent community members but at the same time ignore the less fortunate. Is one soul more valuable than the other? If a single mom living on welfare with two small children is on one side and a doctor and his wife are on the other side, and both have no church home, which are you more inclined to invite to your church? Be warned, don't look down on one another.

Another way we look down on fellow Christians is by ridiculing their appearance. In 2 Corinthians 10, we read that some self-appointed, haughty members of the Corinthian church were making fun of Paul's appearance, "His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing." Although they admitted his teaching was sound, they had the meanness and stupidity to despise him merely because of his physical looks. Sometimes we look down on people because of their physical appearance, simple vocabulary, or simple lifestyle. We are not to do that.

Reasons

After stating the negative rule regarding care for God's children, Jesus gives three reasons Christians will want to carry out this rule.

The protection of angels. "For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven." Believers have angels in heaven to care for them. Isn't that wonderful? The angels' purpose is to serve God by caring for his believers. So Jesus says, "How could you ever look down on these little ones when they are the special care of the angels?" That is how highly God values you—*his child*.

The concern of the Good Shepherd. "What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep . . ." With this parable Jesus reminds us that every true believer—no matter how young, immature, unattractive, or deprived—is one with Christ, purchased with his own precious blood and dearly loved by him. The Good Shepherd's love for his sheep is personal. Did you notice that? It does not matter which sheep goes astray. The Lord is equally concerned for any one of them. He is just as concerned when a poor believer in the slums wanders from him as when a respected leader in your congregation stumbles into sin.

The love of the Father. Another reason believers are not to despise each other is their relationship to their Father in heaven. "In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost" (Matthew 18:14). Like the shepherd who searches for the lost sheep until it is found, the Father individually cares for each believer and wants not one to fall away and be destroyed eternally.

Imagine, in an impersonal world of social security and driver's license numbers, we Christians receive personal care. How thankful we can be!

The world looks down on Christians. We make people nervous because we believe there is right and wrong.

What an appropriate reminder as Thanksgiving approaches. The loving Lord who sent his Holy Spirit to work faith in our hearts at our baptisms and who strengthens that saving gift at his Holy Supper is the same loving Lord who daily cares for you and me—personally.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, loves every one of his children, every one of his sheep. Jesus' love for you is seen in his warning to others that they are not to look down on you. Jesus' love for you is seen in the protection of his holy angels, the concern of the Good Shepherd himself, and the love of a heavenly Father. As God's children we are cared for and loved.

John Parlow is pastor at St. Mark, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

NL

Catholicism today

Disagreements that divided Lutherans from Catholics at the time of the Reformation are still valid causes for continued separation.

John F. Brug

Except perhaps for other Lutherans, no church body grabs our attention like the Roman Catholic Church. It is the world's largest church with over 800 million members. It is the strongest church in virtually every country in which we do mission work, except Scandinavia and some eastern European countries.

Our Lutheran Church separated from the Roman Catholic Church 500 years ago after bitter controversy. A sizable portion of our Lutheran Confessions is devoted to outlining the doctrinal differences that compelled our Lutheran ancestors to make this break. Today, however, many people are asking whether the disagreements that divided Lutherans from Catholics at the time of the Reformation are still valid causes for continued separation.

Official Catholic teaching today subtracts nothing from the authority and infallibility of the pope.

Five hundred years ago Luther said there were two reasons to identify the pope as the Antichrist. The pope usurps Christ's authority to himself, and he curses the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Is Luther's claim still valid today?

Papal authority

The pope's claims of supreme authority in the church have been made more emphatic since the time of the Reformation. The official declaration of papal infallibility was decreed by Vatican I in 1870. In the 1960s, papal authority was reaffirmed by Vatican II, which declared:

Religious submission of will and mind must be shown in a special way to the authentic teaching of the Roman Pontiff even when he is not speaking *ex cathedra* [that is, in a formal doctrinal decree] (*Vatican II*, p. 48).

The new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the official guide for Catholic teaching says:

The Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ and as pastor of the entire church, has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered (Par. 882).

The Supreme Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful—who confirms his brethren in the faith—he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals (Par. 891).

Official Catholic teaching today subtracts nothing from the authority

and infallibility of the pope. He can declare that eating meat on Friday is a sin, or he can change his mind and allow it. He can forbid priests to marry, and he can ban all forms of artificial family planning. He can forbid divorce and remarriage to a wronged wife and allow annulment for an adulterous husband. If Catholics enjoy some greater freedoms today, it is by papal permission not by acknowledgment of their God-given rights. The first of Luther's charges against the Pope is still valid.

Justification

Another article in this issue (p. 30) shows that some Lutherans believe that Lutheran and Catholic teachings on justification are no longer church divisive. Is this true?

The Council of Trent, an important Catholic council called to reject the teachings of the Reformation, went so far as to curse the biblical doctrine of salvation by grace alone through faith alone. It declared:

If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than trust in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is by trust alone by which we are justified, let him be damned [anathema] (Canon XII).

This and many similar statements are still official Catholic teaching. The new Catholic catechism and other contemporary documents still teach that salvation is by a combination of faith and works.

Mary

Catholic teaching still diminishes the glory of Christ by attributing a share in the work of salvation to Mary. The present pope is a zealous promoter of devotion to Mary. The new catechism, which the pope dedicated to Mary, reaffirms her sinlessness and her bodily assumption to heaven. Concerning her role in salvation the catechism says:

Espousing the divine will for salvation wholeheartedly, without a single sin to restrain her, she gave herself entirely to the person and work of her Son; she did so in order to serve the mystery of redemption with him and dependent on him, by God's grace. As St. Irenaeus says, "Being obedient she became the cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race" (Par. 494).

Other teachings

Other traditional Catholic doctrines such as granting equal authority to Scripture and tradition, purgatory, and the sacrifice of the mass still detract from the principles by Scripture alone and by faith alone. Some of these traditional doctrines may be downplayed in more liberal parishes, but nothing has been changed in the official teaching.

Changes in practice

Catholicism is today a troubled church with more widespread disobedience to its moral positions by the laity and more open challenging of its doctrines by the clergy. An extreme shortage of priests threatens the character of Catholic worship. There has been a substantial deterioration in worship attendance and devotional practice. Catholics have become more integrated with

their Protestant neighbors and more assimilated into American culture than they were in the past.

There have been many surface changes in Catholic practice. Masses are in English rather than Latin. The lay people receive both the bread and the wine in Communion. Laity are more active in the worship and leadership of the parish. But these changes affect only the form of Catholic practice not the essence of Catholic doctrine.

Lutheran and Catholic relationships

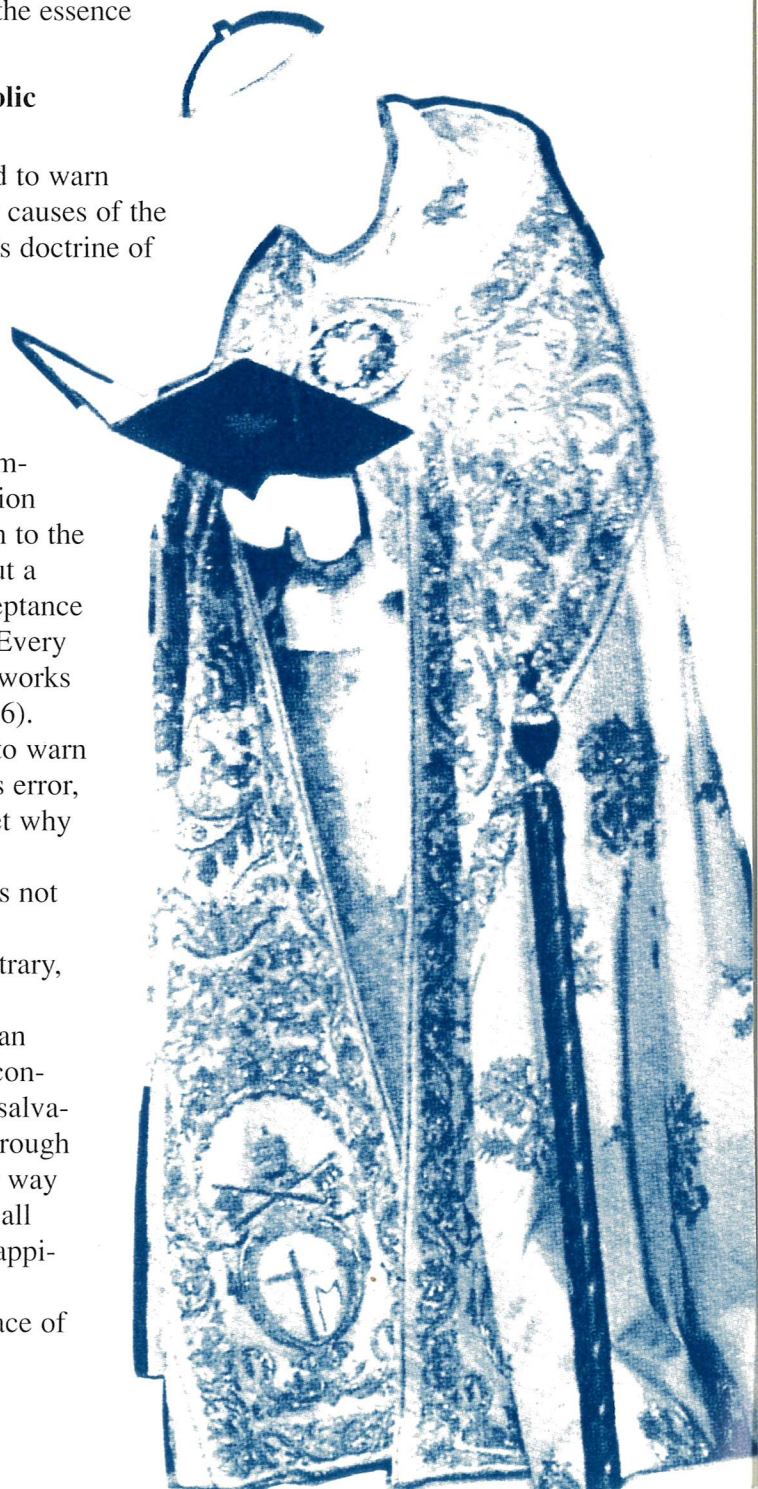
Lutherans still need to warn against the two major causes of the Reformation—Rome's doctrine of papal authority and its teaching of salvation by faith and works together. Recent Lutheran-Catholic compromises on justification have not been a return to the scriptural teaching, but a Lutheran cave-in acceptance of Catholic doctrine. Every mixture of grace and works is works (Romans 11:6).

We must continue to warn against this dangerous error, but we must not forget why we speak against this Catholic teaching. It is not that we are hostile to Catholics. On the contrary, our warnings against Catholic doctrine are an expression of loving concern for Catholics. If salvation by grace alone through faith alone is the only way to salvation, we want all people to share this happiness we have found. Nothing can bring peace of

conscience to troubled sinners except the teaching that forgiveness does not depend on anything in us, but on the completed work of Christ. Defending and proclaiming this comforting message is the chief duty of the church.

NL

John Brug is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.



I believe in the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins

Jesus has given his church, his little flock of believers, the antidote for despair: the forgiveness of sins.

Wayne A. Laitinen

In the early centuries after our Savior's ascension, Roman emperors launched 10 bloody persecutions against Christians. If you were a Christian at that time your choices were simple: give up your life or give up your soul. You could save your life if you cursed Christ or burnt a pinch of incense on a public altar to Caesar.

Under those circumstances, denials of Jesus were not uncommon. In one community, there was such a long line at Caesar's altar that, as dusk fell, the Roman soldiers dismissed the crowd and told them to come back the next day to offer their sacrifices.

But there were many accounts of men, women, and children who testified with their lives that they were not ashamed to confess Jesus as their Savior. In AD 167, Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, was arrested and brought into a stadium full of angry heathen. Caesar's representative demanded, "Swear and I will release you. Curse Christ."

The bishop replied, "Eighty-six years I have served him, and he has never done me any harm. How can I curse my King who saved me?" When the proconsul persisted, "Swear by the Fortune of Caesar,"

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ,
his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand
of God the Father almighty.

From there he will come to judge
the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Polycarp replied, "If you vainly imagine that I shall swear by the Fortune of Caesar, as you say, and think that I don't know what I am, hear a plain answer, 'I am a Christian.'"

We feel alone

Empire-wide persecutions—how diabolically clever! Humanly speaking, this seemed like the perfect formula for the extinction of the Church: death for faithful Christians and denial for weak ones. There was probably many an isolated Christian who, like Elijah (1 Kings 19), wondered if he was the only believer left. At times like that, Satan tempts us to despair with the thought, "What make you think that you're the only one with saving faith and the rest of the world is wrong?"

From the not-so-subtle persecution of political correctness, to soul-destroying doctrine masquerading as truth, to the gruesome torture of Christian missionaries in mainland China, we sometimes wonder if our Lord will find faith on the earth when he returns. Could we survive a bloody inquisition? Can our faith endure in a climate of peace and prosperity?

How appropriate that early

Christians adopted the picture of a ship in a tempest as a symbol of the holy Christian church. Believers of all ages know something of the fear of the Twelve when our Savior slept in the stern of a storm-tossed boat. "Master, Master, we're going to drown," is the cry of "little faith" under fire.

Jesus is always with us

When our afflictions come to us, our single greatest need is the forgiveness of sin. All our fears come from the knowledge that we are guilty before God and deserve his punishment both in this life and the life to come. Adam feared meeting God after he sinned. The Twelve feared drowning. First century Christians feared death. We fear the very same things because we know that we, too, are liable to punishment. The sting of death is sin.

But all Christians know where to turn when fears well up in their hearts. They turn to Jesus. At times it may seem as though he's sleeping in the stern of the boat. But the very gates of hell cannot prevail against us as long as he is there. Jesus has given his church, his little flock of believers, the antidote for despair: the forgiveness of sins. He dispenses the good news of salvation only in

his church. Only the church has been given the sacrament of baptism where sinners receive his holiness. Only the church dispenses Jesus' true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. Only here can we hear the Savior's reassuring words, "Peace, be still." Outside the church there is no Savior, no forgiveness, no peace, no sacraments, and no gospel.

Other believers are with us too

Each week we remind ourselves that we are not alone in the boat. We gather to confess, "I believe in the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins . . ."

Notice we do not say, "I see the Holy Christian church." Membership in Christ's holy church is by faith in him. Saving faith is known only to God.

What a tremendous encouragement God gives us when he tells us that we are not fighting the tempest alone. Wherever the gospel is correctly taught and the sacraments are used according to the way Jesus instituted them, there are pardoned sinners who stand shoulder to shoulder with us in the good fight.

Even our church architecture reflects these comforting truths about the invisible church. The place we

gather to hear our Savior's word and receive his sacraments is called the "nave" (from Latin "navis" meaning "ship"). That ship carries Jesus' followers. Choirs sometimes sing from the balcony, reminding us of the faithful saints who, by God's grace, have stood firm in the tempest over the centuries. Our visible worship keeps the common union of the church universal before our eyes. And it gives us courage to carry on in Jesus' name.

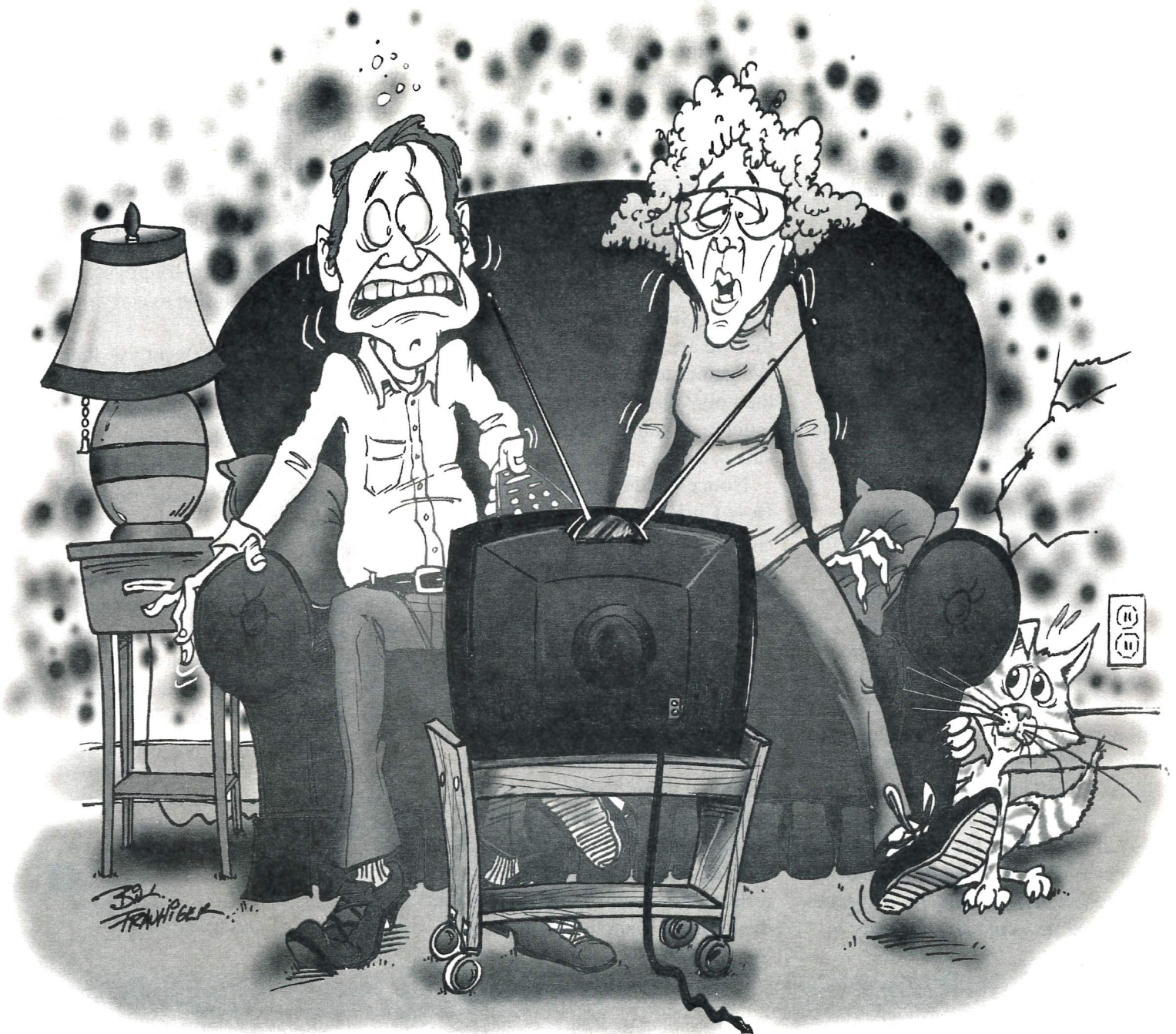
After his "trial" Polycarp walked nobly to the place where he was to be burned to death. As he took off his pastor's cloak, he offered a prayer of thanks to God for making him worthy to suffer martyrdom for Jesus' sake.

The ploy Satan used to destroy the Christian church, God used to strengthen it. Even Polycarp's enemies wondered why he gave up his life so cheerfully. The answer was simple: Where the world saw "the church of the lost cause," Polycarp saw "the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting."

NL

Wayne Laitinen is pastor at Gethsemane, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.





Armchair Christianity

Many Christians, it seems, are willing to sit back in an overstuffed church bench and let others take the risks.

John L. Eich

“X-treme sports” is one of the latest trends in sports. Any sport, it seems, is better if taken to some new extreme. For example, snowboarding is great, but airboarding, riding your snowboard down to earth after jumping out of an airplane with a parachute, is better. Mountain biking is okay, but biking down a snow covered mountain with a slalom course at 70 mph is better. I even received a Bible aimed at these extremists entitled “Extreme Faith—God’s Word Knows No Bounds.”

The greatest risk is doing nothing

Of course, the only place most of us ever see the performances of these extreme athletes is from the depths of the overstuffed lounge chair, safely parked in front of the TV. We watch these “crazy kids,” shaking our heads in disbelief, and preach to our kids that if we ever caught them doing those things we would ground them for 20 years.

But who is really taking the biggest risk? The most risk-laden recreational sports in the world today are the “armchair athletes” and the “couch potato champions.” While we just sit there our blood pressure rises, our arteries clog up, and internalized stress mounts. Those crazy athletes on the other hand keep their bodies fit, their stress levels lower, and their lungs more efficient. Maybe hurtling through the air is less risky than sitting in a chair.

Do-nothing Christians take a similar risk

Christians, too, are increasingly tempted to take a safe, armchair attitude. Many Christians, it seems, are willing to sit back in an overstuffed

church bench and let others take the risks. But like their couch-potato athletic counterparts, these pew potatoes are running a great risk.

Armchair Christianity may seem safe, but it destroys from the inside out. As we sit there, our heart, our love for Jesus, grows weaker. Our spiritual muscles atrophy due to lack of use. Our spiritual lungs become inefficient, breathing out less sin in confession and breathing in less forgiveness and grace. We set ourselves up for a spiritual heart attack. The time will come for a crisis or some attack by sin, and we will find that our faith is too weak, our knowledge of his Word too shallow, to keep us spiritually alive.

God went the extreme to allow us to take risks for him

We can never accuse God of not being an “X-treme” God. God went to extremes when he created man and woman and gave them the freedom to choose or reject a relationship with him. It would have been safer to make us little preprogrammed robots.

That wasn’t good enough—God went to extremes. He didn’t limit his activity to sitting back in a overstuffed heavenly armchair, pushing the buttons of the remote to watch a different segment of human society play out its problems. He got involved. He went to extremes. He sent his only Son to die on the cross for our sins—that extreme! He did not even let his fatherly love stand in the way of our salvation. If he is willing to go to those extremes to save us, won’t he be willing to go to extremes to bless us too?

He promises to surround us with an army of invisible angels to

protect us, as he did with Elijah. He promises and delivers the bounty of heaven. God does not play it safe with his generosity. He promises to give us “whatever we ask for according to his will.” Our God is extreme enough to wade through hatred, despair, and anxiety, and scientific discoveries that “prove” he doesn’t exist. And even our own laziness.

Christianity is not a spectator sport—we won’t receive the winner’s prize just because we sat in the stands and watched others compete.

The disciples found out what God could do only when they started to take the risk of preaching and teaching in his name. We, too, will find out to what extremes God will go for us as we become active in working for him. Christianity is not a spectator sport—we won’t receive the winner’s prize just because we sat in the stands and watched others compete. Jesus wants us to get out of the armchair and stop being pew-potato Christians. He wants us to be “X-treme” Christians.

We have a big enough God to handle whatever risks may come from our extreme Christianity. Take a risk for him. You’ll find out that you have nothing to lose . . . and everything to gain.

NL

John Eich is pastor at Grace, Alma, Michigan.

A spiritual struggle

See how one man works to develop his spiritual identity while still maintaining his cultural heritage.

Carlos Roque

From childhood, I always thought that when it came to God I couldn't trust anybody. I felt that I was being lied to. I felt coerced into behaving the way they wanted me to or else I would end up in purgatory. I had to be good and do good things. After all, look at what Jesus did for me. As a Catholic, I was taught to try to achieve a measure of goodness as payment to God.

No room for trust

Then, after communion at age 12, I quit paying attention during church. Like others, I couldn't understand the Latin Mass. I followed blindly as the priest led the congregation through the service. Physically, I was required to attend church for traditional reasons, but mentally and spiritually, I was not there.

In addition, I had studied the inquisition in Mexico. After reading about the atrocities committed against my ancestors in the name of the church and the name of God, I didn't want anything to do with any church.

Nothing outside of Catholicism attracted me either. In Mexico City, where I spent my first 24 years, all non-Catholic places of worship were called temples. Those buildings didn't look like cathedrals. They were not adorned with gold paint and fancy craftsmanship. They did not have bells. They didn't have statues of saints with painted eyes

that watched kids through the mass and followed them as they moved about in church. They didn't have the image of Christ being crucified, with blood running down his face and body. The temples didn't evoke guilt, pity, or tragedy. Nor did the temples have services every day or even every hour.

Their leaders were called pastors—who got married, were only guides, and looked like normal people. They weren't priests who, we thought, could talk directly to God and who were so holy that they

couldn't get married.

So without all the pomp and ceremony, without all the traditions and symbolism, how could temples be homes of God?

Immigrants' need for identity

A major culture shock when I moved to the United States was that most churches looked like the temples in Mexico. Only the Catholic churches looked familiar, and I did not want to be involved with them again. Without trust in people, without a church to go to or traditions to cling to, I was lost. I tried non-denominational churches, but the trust wasn't there.

I wasn't alone. In my 24 years in the United States, I have met many Hispanic immigrants who were going through the same thing. I know people whose children are in the same condition I was—lost.

For most immigrants, being Mexican in the United States means being Catholic. To be part of *la raza* ("the race" or "the people"), many use Our Lady of Guadalupe as a symbol of racial, national, and religious pride. It says I am brown, Mexican, and Catholic, and I am here in the United States. Being Catholic might be the only political power many Mexican-Americans ever have. For many Mexicans in the United States, to become anything other than Catholic means giving up everything and accepting the stereotypes I have been fighting



Carlos Roque (second from left) attends Victory in Christ, El Paso, Tex. Here he worships at the congregation's annual outdoor service—a far cry from the gilded cathedrals in Mexico.

against. We are not all underdeveloped, apolitical, uneducated, lazy people who live for *mañana*.

Nevertheless, many Mexicans in Mexico and the United States have accepted, but resent, the thought that Anglos are better than they are. For example, when you go shopping in Juarez across the border from El Paso, they always ask, "Do you want to pay in silver or in gold?" Silver refers to pesos and gold to dollars. I respond that dollars are gold in the United States, but pesos are gold in Mexico. Also, Mexicans feel that Lutheranism is another way of confirming that Anglos are better.

When I was in Minnesota, it was different. Lutheranism had such a strong presence I soon learned to live with it. In the border towns, from San Diego to Brownsville, Tex., Lutheranism is not as prevalent.

Eventually, I had to face these struggles of identity. Sometimes, I felt I had betrayed my family, country, and culture, and was being submissive to a higher culture. I didn't want to feel this way, so I kept using Catholicism and its traditions as part of my identity in the United States.

At home as a Lutheran

But I have been blessed. For 12 years, God placed me in an area where most people were Lutherans. Soon I had to admit that this was the only Christian denomination I had come across that was completely devoted to the teachings of Christ and the study of the Bible. I didn't have to pray to a saint to communicate with God.

I read "Here I Stand," where Luther explained salvation. I related to his struggle. It was a simple concept for me to grasp, something I

could handle.

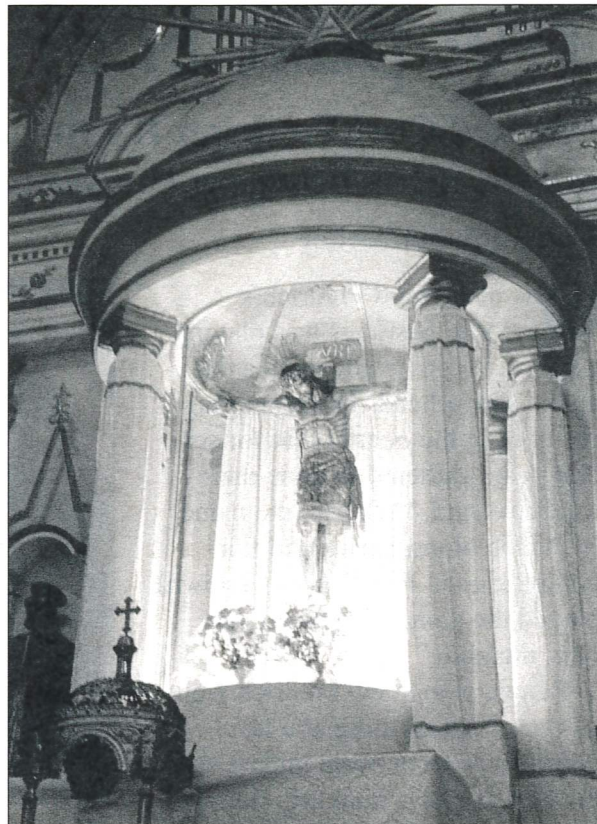
Diane and I were married in the Lutheran church and my daughter Olivia was baptized in it. That was when we started to work toward forming a Christian family to give Olivia the benefits of the gospel.

Many things have changed. Many people in Mexico are looking for a different option. Unfortunately, there are many church options out there.

Another change is that my mother (who has a lot of influence in our family) and I have come to terms so that I don't feel like a traitor. Today, I can go into any temple and have a strong stand in my belief that I am saved by faith alone.

I feel much better about myself and my relationship with God, but I still have a long way to go. I still love those old cathedrals, and I can still taste those *bunuelos* and *tamales* sold in the plaza by the cathedrals during *la Cuaresma* (holy week). I still want to celebrate my saint date. I still crave hearing those bells calling for mass or waking me up for school. I still remember those bells sounding every hour, comforting me on sleepless nights.

I am still sensitive to political conflicts such as the new immigration laws that seem to be designed to keep Mexican people constantly in check. To be honest, my nationalistic sentiments sometimes direct me to go back to Catholicism, just



The main front altar of the Cathedral Cristo de las Vidrias in Teposcolula, Oaxaca, Mexico. For many Mexican-Catholics, it is seen as traitorous to their culture to leave the Catholic church.

to show them. Then my pastor helps me remember that politics don't mix with church matters. Every Sunday I go to church, and the congregation, formed by people of several races, reminds me that we are all God's children. Pastors have worked hard to earn my trust as representatives of God.

I am grateful for the support the El Paso congregations have offered me. More than anything else, I am thankful that I don't feel guilty for the death of Christ, and that, instead of being afraid of, I have learned to love God.

Carlos Roque is a member of Victory in Christ, El Paso, Texas. **NL**

The past is present

Edward Carl Fredrich II's influence on the synod spread far beyond the pages of his book on the synod's history.

Morton A. Schroeder

One of Edward Fredrich's favorite pastimes was playing skat, a card game allegedly a cut above sheepshead. The remaining member of the quartet that for several years gathered to hone their intellects said, "Whitey (the name by which blond-haired and fair-complexioned Fredrich was known) played the game at a level I can only imagine."

People who knew Fredrich well say he did everything at a level comparable to or more intense than his skat playing: thinking, studying, reading, teaching, researching, defending the weak and voiceless—from preborns to high school, college, or seminary students who pulled stunts others deemed worthy of discipline.

Born to be a historian

Although Fredrich followed his father into the ministry, he walked a different path. The elder Fredrich spent 46 years in the parish ministry, 43 of them at St. Peter, Helenville, Wis. His son served one parish five years. The other 45 years were spent in synodical schools. With each call were added more, serious responsibilities. Ironically, his professional career climaxed with teaching seminarians, men who he thought would do better than he in parish ministering.

It's fitting that Fredrich, who succeeded John Philipp Koehler as the historian of the synod, was rooted in Helenville, one of those hamlets



Edward Fredrich II. Besides shaping the minds of students in several synodical schools, Fredrich gave more WELS members knowledge about the synod's history through his book *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans*.

that only people who live in or near know of. They elicit fierce and fascinating loyalty from the people who grow up in them. Fredrich told his children, "They are the backbone of America."

Helenville is located in the heartland of the Wisconsin Synod. The local congregation, founded in 1848 by German immigrants, is two years older than the synod itself.

Palpable history and rural life helped form the character of the man who, building on Koehler's work, *The History of the Wisconsin Synod*, wrote the seminal history of the Wisconsin Synod: *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans*. Central to Fredrich's childhood were parsonage and one-room school, still sitting at the foot of an imposing hill.

The white frame church, with its 80-foot spire and surmounted gold cross, dignifies the summit of that hill, and worshipers are given a unique panorama of the countryside.

Fredrich and two sisters, who bracketed him in age, like other children of the 20s and the 30s, made their own fun. They rode sleds, swam and fished, played croquet and chess, tried to duplicate circus acts, formed clubs, plotted grass tennis courts and miniature golf courses, and enjoyed weekly band concerts. If family finances permitted, everyone was treated to a hamburger. Cost for the Fredrich family? Fifty cents!

When Fredrich finished school at St. Peter, he was enrolled in St. John, Jefferson, six miles down the road, to repeat the eighth grade. His mother felt that he, at age 12, was too young to be sent to Northwestern Prep, about 22 miles away. His second eighth grade teacher was Otto W. Jungkuntz, the oldest living teacher in WELS.

The boy, once too young to be entrusted to a boarding school, became a leader when he did enroll at Northwestern. A lifelong friend said, "He was our 'Mr. President' and our 'Editor-in-Chief' throughout our prep and college years at Watertown." All the while, he cultivated his dry, droll, pungent, and scholarly humor. Like his love for history, through which he made past be present, it became part of him, a character facet everyone recalls.

Supported by his faithful wife

Fredrich graduated from the seminary at a time when calls were scarce and waited several months before receiving a call to teach at Winnebago Lutheran Academy (WLA), a position more important in his life for what it gave him than for what he gave it.

Shortly before school began in '42, WLA found itself without a commercial teacher and a janitor. Fredrich and a colleague were drafted to get the commercial room ready for the new teacher, a "young lady, who was coming in the afternoon." The men, less than ecstatic, had read nothing in their calls about janitorial service. However, relationships improved between Elaine and Edward, helped by school projects they worked on together. By April 1944 romance was in the air. Within 17 months they said their "I do's." Elaine didn't know it, but her "I do" included the unpaid position of chief secretary, and she became her husband's tireless amanuensis until secretaries became an accepted faculty perk.

Fredrich was famously impractical, and family lore is full of his battles with kitchen equipment. Three pots fell victim to his inability to brew a cup of coffee. When Fredrich said he could "bake Jello," he was acknowledging his dependence on his wife.

And ditto for his clothes. To make sure he was reasonably well dressed for the largely feminine classes he taught at Dr. Martin Luther College, he'd coyly revert to German, the language of his childhood, and ask, "*Bin ich schön genug?*" Roughly translated, it asks, "Am I cute enough?" Yard work was done only reluctantly and

accompanied with considerable under-the-breath muttering.

Productive to the end

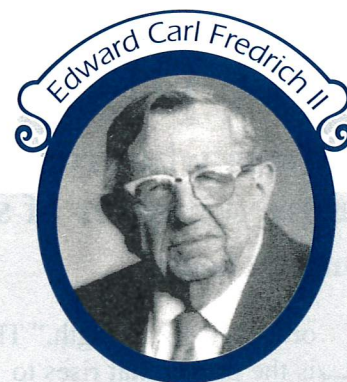
Fredrich, a multi-faceted individual, generously shared his gifts in getting a worthwhile organization started, organizing estimable projects, delivering learned papers, and writing. He held membership in, was an officer or editor of, or contributed to NL, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* (WLQ), WELS Lutherans for Life, and WELS Historical Institute and its Journal. His *piece de resistance*, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans*, should be in the library of anyone interested in WELS.

According to a family member, Fredrich began work on a history of the Synodical Conference, refreshing his memory with basic readings, drafting 16 chapter titles, and beginning a preface. When he learned he had pancreatic cancer, "... he abandoned it to face a bigger challenge."

This action was, according to those who knew Fredrich intimately, in keeping with his character. He was in control of himself, and his emotional involvement in delicate situations was rarely visible. He was introspective and neither outgoing nor gregarious. Although he had a facile mind and encyclopedic knowledge of history, he was a humble man and never flaunted his vast, easily reclaimable knowledge.

Death stilled Fredrich's voice, but his presence remains, especially with former students. One said, "When I read Prof. F. in the WLQ (or other places for that matter), I can hear his voice in the classroom, his deliberate style, and dry sense of humor."

Morton Schroeder, a retired DMLC professor, lives in Appleton, Wisconsin.



July 20, 1917, born to Pastor Edward and Mrs. Maria Streich Fredrich, in Milwaukee

1938, graduated from Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis.

1941, graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS), Thiensville, Wis.

1941-1948, instructor, Winnebago Lutheran Academy (WLA), Fond du Lac, Wis.

Sept. 1, 1945, married Elaine D. Schultz

1945-1948, principal, WLA

1948-1954, pastor, Paul the Apostle, Detroit, Mich.

1954, delegate to crucial meeting of Synodical Conference. Represented WELS position on Scouting

1954-1964, professor, Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw

1964-1970, professor, Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

1970-1991, professor, WLS, Mequon

1978, appointed managing editor, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*

1992, published *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans*

1994, awarded Distinguished Service Award by Lutheran Historical Conference

March 2, 1995, died, Watertown, Wis.

March 6, buried, Graceland Cemetery, Milwaukee

God promises strength

For those who trust in God's promises, family planning is more a matter of self-control than birth control.

Wayne A. Mueller

“Lord, give me strength.” This is the prayer that rises to God with every sigh the Christian breathes. Pastors comment that members who come in for counseling are seldom looking for answers. Most know what God wants them to do in their situation. They come for counseling to find the strength to do the right thing.

A gap between knowing and doing

The same is true of Christian parents who wrestle with the ethics of family planning. For those who trust in God's promises, family planning is more a matter of self-control than birth control.



The easy part of family planning is listening to God's promises. . . . The hard part is our daily struggle to put God's words into practice.

We know, for instance, that sexual contact apart from marriage is wrong. What we really need is strength to remain chaste. We know that abortifacient drugs and procedures are sinful. What we lack is the self denial that takes us beyond pill popping and gratification on demand. We know God promises to bless us through the children we

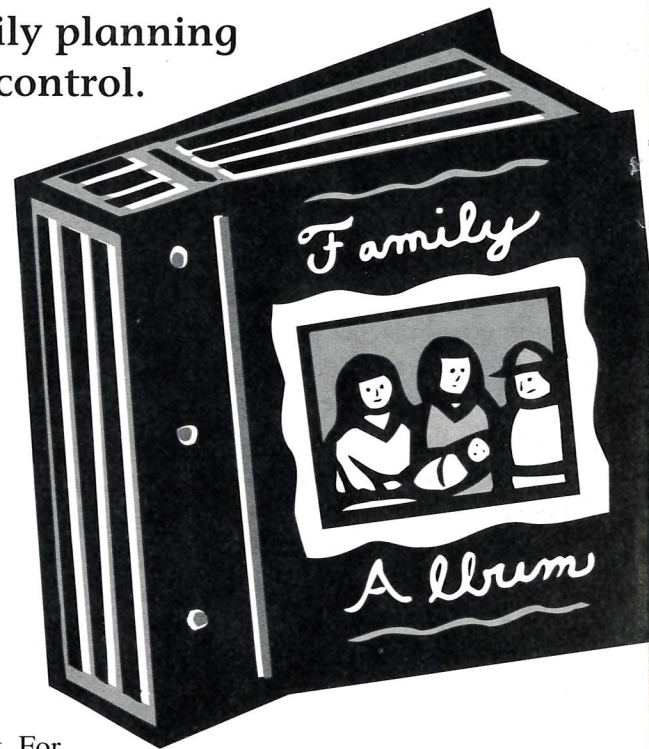
bear. What we crave is the spiritual power to put child-bearing and raising above materialism and professional goals.

The easy part of family planning is listening to God's promises and reviewing the loving guidance he offers in his law. The hard part is our daily struggle to put God's words into practice. We all share St. Paul's classic confession: “For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing” (Romans 7:18,19).

A means to bridge the gap

So, in addition to God's promises to bless us and guide us, we need another assurance from him. We need his promise to provide the spiritual strength to respond to his blessings and follow his holy will. “But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one” (2 Thessalonians 3:3).

Spiritual strength comes through spiritual exercise. Basic to this regimen is our daily confession of sins and renewal in God's

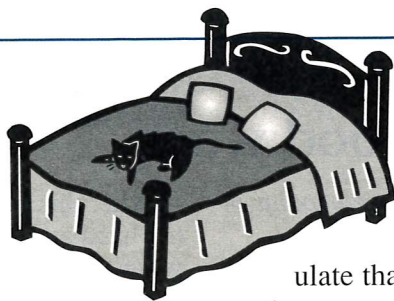


forgiving grace. God leads us through these spiritual calisthenics with his Word. To avail themselves of his strength, Christian parents get into God's Word.

To bear and raise children requires husbands and wives to make cooperative decisions. Many Christian couples seek help for this by studying the Bible together. Those who do this first thing in the morning or last at night seem best able to maintain the habit. When God is able to talk to both of you at the same time, it is more likely that you come to a common understanding on family planning. The availability of Christian literature in the home, daily family devotions, and regular Bible class attendance enhance the spiritual context for making decisions and acting on them.

God also strengthens us through

the example and advice of our fellow Christians. "Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character'"



(1 Corinthians 15:33). Our unchurched friends offer little but self-justifying opinion. Pill boxes provide medical information. But mature Christian friends can give us a perspective seasoned with godly wisdom and experience.

And let's not forget an obvious source of strength—public worship. Weekly worship provides all of the above—confession and absolution, Bible study, and Christian fellowship. In addition, the holy sacraments provide forgiveness and power for Christian living.

Very few sermons address the specifics of family planning. But every sermon offers what family planners need most, that is, the strength God's grace provides to do the right thing. "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age" (Titus 2:11,12).



The power of God at work

So, from beginning to end, the promises of God give Christian parents all they need for family planning. We may fear that bearing children will wreck our career or our figure. We may wonder where we will get the money or energy to raise the children we bear. But God's promise that children will be a blessing to us allays our fears and

invites our trust.

We may doubt the wisdom of God's laws or speculate that the "church" is making too many rules. We might speculate that God doesn't have our best interests in mind when he tells us that the quick and easy way is not necessarily the best. But God dispels those fears, too. He promises that every divine law was formulated with a heart of love and concern for our well-being.

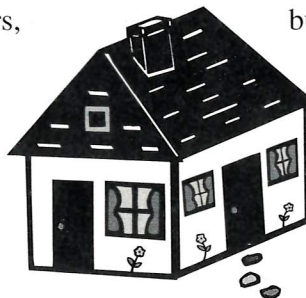
We may hesitate to do the right thing because so many people around us make the wrong seem so appealing. Sometimes we want to believe that medical advances have eliminated the need for chastity, abstinence, and self-control. We might even be tempted to buy into the pagan ethic that the end justifies the means.

Again, God steps in with his unbreakable promise of strength. "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

Some Christian counselors consider family planning to be a misnomer. Unbelievers can only pretend to be in control of their lives. "In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps"

(Proverbs 16:9). If we try to run our own lives apart from God's promises and guidance, then our family planning is sinful. "Woe to the obstinate children," declares the Lord, "to those who carry out plans that are not mine" (Isaiah 30:1).

But family planning is a proper term for the decisions believing parents make. God not only allows, but empowers those who believe in Jesus to make plans in line with his will. "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed" (Proverbs 16:3). To trust our family plans and actions to God, we must all pray, "Lord, give me strength."



Wayne Mueller is the administrator for the WELS Board for Parish Services.

NL





Administration building becomes more accessible

In August, staff members at the synod administration building in Milwaukee broke ground for renovations to the existing headquarters. Currently, the building is not handicapped accessible. These changes will allow greater accessibility.

The first step in remodeling was to move the marble sign in front of the building. Other changes include a new elevator and eliminating the stairs that lead to the front door.



President Karl R. Gurgel (right) and Clair Ochs, Board of Trustees administrator, break ground for the WELS administration building expansion. The expansion will allow for handicapped accessibility.

“It was a good week.”

Vacation Bible schools are popular in the United States. Not only in the United States, but in WELS world mission fields as well. In Russia, the congregation in Akadengorodok had as many as 24 children during the week. Although the church in Novosibirsk only had nine children the first day, as many as 27 came later in the week. At the closing service, about 45 people attended. In Iskitim, the first couple of days averaged between 24 to 35 children.

But those are only numbers. Here are some thoughts from Missionary Michael Ewart on the people reached by the VBS program in Iskitim.

A public school teacher brought several children by train from 12 kilometers away. She sat in on our adult class and was interested in learning about the Bible. One day I got a little off-track to explain clearly the problem of sin, and God's solution in Christ. Later in the week she asked us to baptize her two sons at the closing service on Sunday.

We sent invitations home with all the children and asked them to sing in the closing service. That Sunday, the weather was terrible. The rain was pouring. I was sure we wouldn't have many people. I was wrong. Thirty-three children came. A total of 65 people were there.

The two boys were baptized, and several other children now want to be baptized.

In Bible class that day we studied Romans 3. I reviewed what Paul said: We are all sinful. We are not able to be right with God by doing what the law says. Instead, the law shows us all the more that we are sinners. This is a big problem. But we are justified in a completely different way. God redeemed us through the blood of his Son Jesus Christ. Through Jesus our sins are forgiven and heaven is ours as a free gift of God.

After this review, a visitor raised her hand and said, “It's so simple.” I wasn't sure I understood, so I asked her to repeat. “The way to heaven . . . it's so simple.” She understood! Yes, it is so simple. What a great God!

That week was one of those weeks where it was really fun to be a world missionary. Oh, there were some problems. But the blessings overshadowed them. Many adults and children heard the gospel clearly for the first time in their lives. The children sang praises to God. Two children were washed of their sins in baptism. It was a good week.

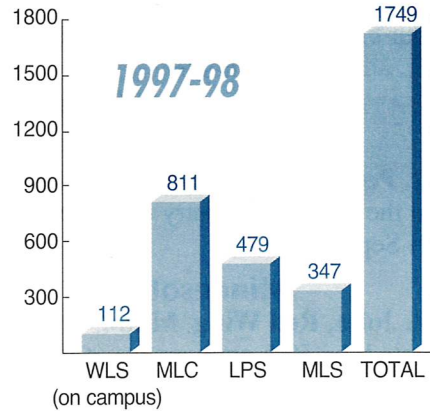
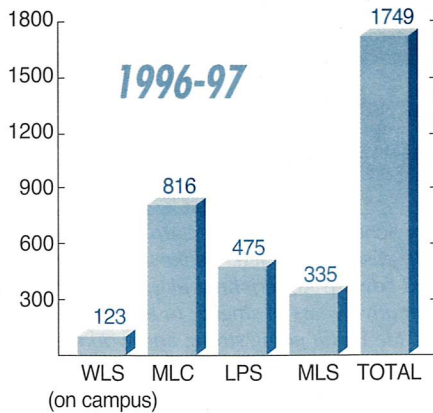
YOUTH NEWS

Dan Kamin, an eighth-grader at St. John, Lannon, Wis., participated in the USA Track and Field National Junior Olympics in Baton Rouge, La., on July 24-27. Over 6,000 athletes from the United States competed in five different age groups.

Chuck Schied, a senior at Hellgate High School, Missoula, Mont., is a finalist in the 1997 National Merit Scholarship program and will receive a College Merit Scholarship. More than one million high school seniors enter the program; 14,000 become finalists. Schied, a member at Mt. Zion, Missoula, Mont., was also in the 1997 All-State Choir for Montana and a member of the 1997 MENC All-Northwest Choir.

Here are the first semester enrollments of the four WELS ministerial education schools:

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis.; Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.; Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.; and Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.



Blitz building for Christ

Over 35 Builders For Christ (BFC) members from nine states gathered in Howard, Wis., to help members of Christ the King, an Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) congregation, build a church.

What makes this different from the 20 other churches BFC has helped construct is that it didn't take them over a month to put up the exterior.

It took them four days.

"We hope to do it this way from now on because it was such a success," said Dale Mueller, BFC director.

This "building blitz" wasn't the only project first. This was also the first time the builders helped an ELS church.

Local media recognized these firsts. Three Green Bay TV stations and numerous newspapers covered different phases of construction.

Builders For Christ, a service of the Board for Home Missions and a division of WELS Kingdom Workers, started in the late 1980s with six to eight members. Now over 240 people from 17 states help congregations with building projects.



Leonard Buelow, pastor of Christ the King, held a short worship service for the cornerstone laying of the new church. This is the first church building for Christ the King. Previously the congregation worshiped in a grade school.



Christ-Light® FAQ

Christ-Light®, the synod's new coordinated religion curriculum for cradle roll through grade 12, will be phased into congregations over four years, starting in 1998.

Gerald Kastens, youth discipleship administrator, answers frequently asked questions (FAQ) about Christ-Light.

Do you envision the number of congregations that adopt the new curriculum to be similar to the number that adopted Christian Worship?

The purpose of the Christ-Light Introduction Program effort is to do a thorough job of preparing congregations for the new curriculum. We are confident that the majority of WELS congregations will use the coordinated religion curriculum because of its quality and uniqueness. There is nothing like it among the other Lutheran church bodies. There is much to be said about the confidence that WELS congregations have in Northwestern Publishing House resources.

When will Christ-Light become available?

Pre-kindergarten through grade six materials will be ready for use in Lutheran elementary schools and Sunday schools in 1998. New Testament lessons will be published first, followed by Old Testament lessons in 1999. Some topical Bible study courses will also be ready for use in grades 7-8. Beginning in 1999, cradle roll and high school materials will roll off the presses.



St. Michael's Lutheran Home joins TLHA

St. Michael's Lutheran Home, a nursing home owned and operated by St. Michael, Fountain City, Wis., since 1947, became a part of The Lutheran Home Association (TLHA), based in Belle Plaine, Minn., in January.

The new affiliation makes for a more stable financial environment and a more effective administration for St. Michael's Lutheran Home, a 55-bed facility with about 70 employees.

St. Michael's congregation merged its nursing home with TLHA because of the association's rich history and commitment to providing Christian health care and because of identical missions and purposes.

The Lutheran Home Association, whose services include home health care, supportive home care, supported living services, independent senior apartments, assisted living, skilled nursing, group foster care, and adult and child daycare, serves over 850 individuals daily with 650 caregivers. TLHA owns or operates 13 facilities in Minnesota and Wisconsin.



The pastor and his wife were cleaning up some things at church when they asked their 18-month-old son, Jacob, "What's the name of our church?" "The Price Is Right," came the firm reply.

District news

Dakota-Montana

On Sept. 7, **St. Paul, Rapid City, S.D.**, dedicated an 8,500 square foot addition to their church, providing four classrooms, an office, an elevator, and storage rooms.

Phil Paustian

Michigan

St. Peter, Plymouth, Mich., celebrated the 50th anniversary of its school on Sept. 28.

Minnesota

St. John, Red Wing, Minn., celebrated the 50th anniversary of its school on Sept. 14. . . . On Aug. 17, **St. Paul, North Mankato, Minn.**, celebrated the 25th anniversary in the pastoral ministry of **James Liggett**.

South Atlantic

Ocean Drive, Pompano Beach, Fla., burned its mortgage on Sept. 7.

Western Wisconsin

St. Michael's Lutheran Home, Fountain City, Wis., celebrated its 50th anniversary on Sept. 19-21 with an Employees' Day and a Family/Resident/Community Day.

Northern Wisconsin



Gregg Schoeneck (left) and Larry Zessin (right), pastors at Grace, Oshkosh, Wis., presented Edward Kolterjahn a plaque for 60 consecutive years of singing in the church choir. He is still going strong and working with his 11th choir director.

Southeastern Wisconsin

On Sept. 7, Wisconsin Lutheran High School celebrated the 25th anniversary of teachers **Carol Krause** and **Tim Schneider**.

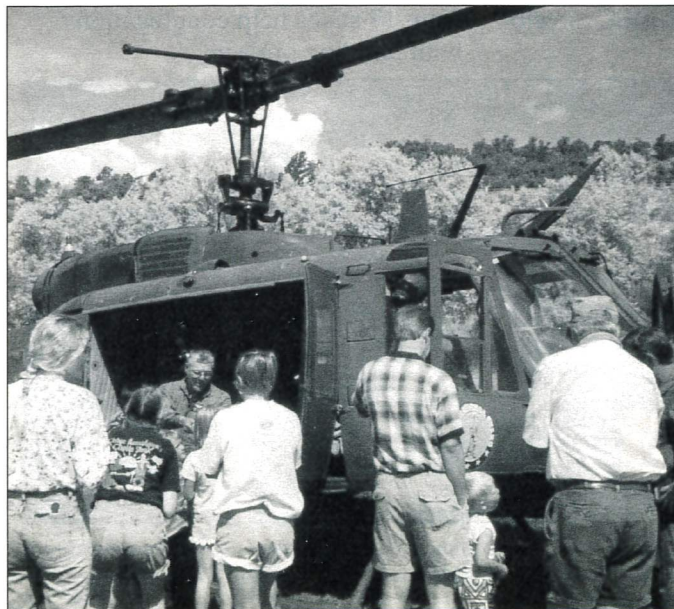
UPDATE

Pastor Scott Oehlhafen is the new reporter for the Southeastern Wisconsin District. Those who live in the SEW district can send their news to:

Pastor Scott Oehlhafen
1052 White Rock Ave
Waukesha WI 53186

Nebraska

Redeemer, Council Bluff, Iowa, celebrated its 50th anniversary on June 8.



As part of the vacation Bible school of Mountain Valley, Eagle, Colo., a Colorado National Guard helicopter landed next to the building where they held vacation Bible school. Soldiers, who were searching for wreckage of an Air Force A-10 bomber that had crashed in the mountains nearby, came to talk to the children.

The theme of Mountain Valley's VBS was "Great Battles of the Bible." The local police department, fire department, sheriff's department, and Smokey the Bear from the U.S. Forest Service also came to talk to the children.

Mission work is hard work

Talk to any missionary and you'll hear how much he values one person, one prospect, one soul. That's partly because mission work takes a lot of time. Yet there are often unexpected blessings.

This is how mission work has been going for Zion's, located on the Rosebud Indian Reservation, in Mission, S.D. Zion's pastor, James Fleming, is working with the Board for World Missions to reach out to the Lakota Indians. The work has been slow, but unexpected blessings came through vacation Bible school.

On the first day of VBS, over 100 children showed up. Over five days, a total of 141 children heard the Word of God—the majority were Lakota.

Six students from Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, and one pastor track student from Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., taught the classes. Members from Zion's helped out with crafts and snacks.

Fleming responded, "It was wonderful to see Christians who did not know each other, come together and work side by side to carry out the Lord's work."



Craft time at vacation Bible school, held in the Antelope Community building on the Rosebud Indian Reservation. This was part of a joint outreach effort to the Lakota Indians undertaken by the Board for World Missions and Zion's, Mission, S.D. Over 100 children attended the first day, surpassing all expectations.

The MLC student, Josh Kesting, stayed the whole summer, helping make follow-up calls to prospects. Through the VBS outreach effort and follow-up on parents, one Lakota couple wants to take instruction and learn more about Jesus.

"My prayer was 'Lord give me one,'" says Fleming. "God doubled my request and gave me two. I am thankful and overjoyed with this blessing."

So the work continues. Slowly, but surely.

Obituaries

Walter C. Voss 1902-1997

Walter C. Voss was born July 16, 1902, in Frankenlust, Mich. He died Aug. 7, 1997, in Cass City, Mich.

A 1927 graduate of the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary in Wauwatosa, he served at Christ, Shields; Immanuel, Tawas City; Salem, Owosso; and New Salem, Sebawaing, all in Michigan; and Trinity, Jenera, and Grace, Kenton, in Ohio.

He is survived by wife, Lydia, four sons, three daughters, 21 grandchildren, and 41 great-grandchildren.

Otto Frederick Mammel 1929-1997

Otto Frederick Mammel was born March 20, 1929 in Bay City, Mich. He died Aug. 20, 1997 in Onalaska, Wis.

A 1950 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, he served at Epiphany, Racine, Wis.; St. Paul, Stevensville, Mich.; and Luther High School, Onalaska, Wis.

He is survived by wife, Betty, two sons, two daughters, a sister, and nine grandchildren.

rē·li'giōn

Defining religion

Nicene Creed: A creed written at the Council of Nicea (AD 325) and later revised at the Council of Constantinople (AD 381) to confess the scriptural doctrine of the Trinity, which was being attacked by the Arians. The Arians denied that the Son was true God from all eternity. This creed emphasizes that Jesus is true God and true man and is commonly recited in communion services.



There is a Place (Code 5186), 1997, 10 min., color, JSCA

The students of Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., tell of their goals and experiences at MLC—the first video on our new pastor-teacher college.

Preaching the Pure and Clear Gospel in Columbia (Code 5187), 1997, 23 min., color, JSCA

Our missionaries in Columbia describe the growth of our mission in this South American nation.

The Mwembezi Lutheran Rural Health Center (Code 5188), 1997, 25 min., color, JSCA

This medical mission continues to serve the health needs of African people, especially during the current AIDS epidemic there.

The Revolutionary (Code 8338), 1997, 48 min., color, JSCA

This summary of the life of Jesus does a good job of telling the whole story in relatively short time.

The Light in the Darkness (Code 8343), 1997, 48 min., color, CA

Germans living in Russia were severely persecuted under Communism, especially during the Second World War. Since many of these were Lutherans, their experience is similar to that of the Polish German Lutherans who were served by the Wisconsin Synod.

Videos are available for rental by congregations, schools, and church groups. Order from Audiovisual Library Services, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113 St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284; 414/475-6600; 1-800-662-6093.

Set to serve

Under restructuring, two new full-time synod positions will offer support—for the spread of the message of salvation and to the synod president, giving him more time for other duties such as being the synod's pastor.

The synod's first vice president will serve as the Vice President for Mission and Ministry. Delegates at the 1997 synod convention elected Pastor Richard Lauersdorf to this position.

"My wish and prayer are that whatever work is done will share the message of salvation of Jesus Christ in the synod and the world. Every synodical program should carry and be driven by that concern," said Lauersdorf.

Lauersdorf wants to help the synod's areas of ministry by offering the following:

- Encouragement to continue the work already being done but to always seek alternative ways for carrying out the mission.
- Coordination among the areas of ministry so more interdivisional work on mutual projects can be accomplished.
- Communication between the different areas of ministry and between the areas of ministry and the synodical governing bodies.
- Critiques for each area of ministry.

A 1960 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Lauersdorf served at Our Saviour, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada; St. Matthew, Ontario, Wis.; St. John, Kendall, Wis.; and St. John, Jefferson, Wis. He was on the Board for World Missions from 1968-1987 and has served as the synod's first vice president since 1987.

He and his wife, Charlene, have four grown children: Beth, Mark, Jim, and Anne.



Pastor Richard Lauersdorf

For the position of Executive Director of Support Services, the synod hired Doug Wellumson.

His main goal as executive director is to promote cohesion, continuity, and customer service in the areas under his direction as they provide support for the areas of ministry under the vice president.

"Our prime customer is the mission and ministry side of the house," said Wellumson. "Serving them is the reason for our existence."

Wellumson has a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Minnesota, a Master of Arts in public administration from Webster University, St. Louis, Mo., and a Master of Science in Industrial Technology from the University of Wisconsin, Platteville. He was a management consultant for Michaels Engineering, Inc., La Crosse, Wis.; the business manager for Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie Du Chien, Wis.; an officer in the United States Navy Supply Corps; and an adjunct faculty member at five colleges/universities. He also served as program planning analyst for the former Coordinating Council of WELS.

He and his wife, Sandy, have three grown children: Chris, Eric, and Andrew. A fourth son, Matthew, died in 1995.

The Vice President for Mission and Ministry oversees and coordinates the activities of Home Missions, World Missions, Ministerial Education, Parish Services, and several other commissions.

The Executive Director of Support Services is responsible for support functions including accounting, budgeting, benefit plans, data information services, finance, human resources, legal, lending, planning, real estate, and revenue forecasting.



Douglas Wellumson

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD **Financial report****CONGREGATION MISSION SUBSCRIPTION PERFORMANCE**

Six months ended June 30, 1997

| | Total Subscription | | Offerings Received | | | | Annlzd Ave Per Commun |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| | Communicants 12/31/96 | 1997 | Year to Date Projected | June Offerings | Six Months Offerings | Percent of Sbscrptn | |
| Arizona-California | 17,019 | \$990,894 | \$445,189 | \$75,625 | \$439,546 | 98.7% | \$51.65 |
| Dakota-Montana | 9,313 | 427,354 | 172,277 | 24,485 | 166,884 | 96.9 | 35.84 |
| Michigan | 37,016 | 2,134,950 | 913,992 | 129,261 | 876,004 | 95.8 | 47.33 |
| Minnesota | 43,576 | 2,381,269 | 1,006,571 | 163,451 | 993,094 | 98.7 | 45.58 |
| Nebraska | 10,126 | 573,107 | 229,745 | 27,336 | 234,022 | 101.9 | 46.22 |
| North Atlantic | 3,696 | 312,620 | 146,941 | 23,545 | 146,024 | 99.4 | 79.02 |
| Northern Wisconsin | 61,316 | 2,491,834 | 1,018,734 | 182,483 | 1,047,701 | 102.8 | 34.17 |
| Pacific Northwest | 4,890 | 273,134 | 129,030 | 14,067 | 123,846 | 96.0 | 50.65 |
| South Atlantic | 6,453 | 426,791 | 208,033 | 35,600 | 208,712 | 100.3 | 64.69 |
| South Central | 4,357 | 377,004 | 174,750 | 32,533 | 184,545 | 105.6 | 84.71 |
| Southeastern Wisconsin | 57,805 | 3,340,777 | 1,310,025 | 181,843 | 1,273,062 | 97.2 | 44.05 |
| Western Wisconsin | 59,810 | 3,036,217 | 1,289,698 | 189,643 | 1,260,495 | 97.7 | 42.15 |
| Total - This Year | 315,377 | 16,765,951 | 7,044,985 | 1,079,872 | 6,953,935 | 98.7 | 44.10 |
| Total - Last Year | 315,099 | 16,517,537 | 6,947,374 | 1,005,081 | 6,819,353 | 98.2 | 43.28 |

CURRENT BUDGETARY FUND**Statement of activities / Year ended June 30**

| | 1997 actual | 1996 actual | 1997 budget |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Changes in Unrestricted Net Assets | | | |
| Revenues: | | | |
| Congregational Mission Offerings | \$ 16,296,082 | \$ 15,973,756 | \$ 16,036,000 |
| Gifts and memorials | 4,678,327 | 2,585,413 | 4,446,000 |
| Bequest/planned giving | 1,078,311 | 548,605 | 912,000 |
| Tuition and fees | 8,297,298 | 7,771,046 | 8,363,000 |
| Other | 193,026 | 128,442 | 110,000 |
| Transfers-endwmt/trust earnings | 274,755 | 277,784 | 258,000 |
| Transfers-gift trust | 7,649,332 | 8,093,060 | 7,650,000 |
| Transfers-continuing programs | 3,308,416 | 3,083,847 | 2,986,000 |
| Transfers-other | 3,392 | 100 | - |
| Total revenues | <u>41,778,939</u> | <u>38,462,053</u> | <u>40,761,000</u> |
| Expenditures: | | | |
| Administration Division | 3,884,851 | 2,791,294 | 3,903,600 |
| Home Missions Division | 7,429,713 | 6,338,267 | 7,695,500 |
| World Missions Division | 8,197,877 | 7,328,622 | 7,632,000 |
| Ministerial Education Division | 18,496,873 | 18,740,574 | 18,383,100 |
| Parish Services Division | 1,748,793 | 1,345,900 | 1,655,800 |
| Fiscal Services Division | 1,788,592 | 2,132,405 | 1,491,000 |
| Total expenditures | <u>41,546,699</u> | <u>38,677,062</u> | <u>40,761,000</u> |
| Changes in Unrestricted Net Assets | 232,240 | (215,009) | |
| Changes in Temp Restricted Net Assets | | | |
| Gifts and memorials | 2,883,454 | 2,487,962 | |
| Bequest/planned giving | 3,052 | 465,600 | |
| Change in value of trust agreements | 176,048 | 1,743,705 | |
| Satisfaction of restrictions | (2,494,994) | - | |
| Total revenues | <u>567,560</u> | <u>4,697,267</u> | |
| Change in temp restricted net assets | <u>567,560</u> | <u>4,697,267</u> | |
| Net assets - beginning of year | 5,109,960 | 627,702 | |
| Net assets - end of period | <u>\$ 5,909,760</u> | <u>\$ 5,109,960</u> | |

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

| | June 30, 1997 | June 30, 1996 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Assets: | | |
| Cash and cash equivalents | \$844,061 | \$884,131 |
| Due from other funds | 24,532 | 66,720 |
| Accounts receivable-cash adv. | 101,750 | 99,250 |
| Cash advances-schools | 280,388 | 195,870 |
| Other accounts receivable | 103,424 | 119,219 |
| Contributions receivable | 5,264,827 | 4,697,267 |
| Mortgage note receivable | 17,790 | 19,567 |
| Allowance for doubtful accts | (92,000) | (92,000) |
| Prepaid expenses | 58,923 | 16,985 |
| Total assets | <u>\$ 6,603,695</u> | <u>\$ 6,007,009</u> |
| Liabilities and net assets: | | |
| Accounts payable | 693,935 | 897,049 |
| Total liabilities | <u>693,935</u> | <u>897,049</u> |
| Unrestricted net assets | 644,933 | 412,693 |
| Temp restricted net assets | 5,264,827 | 4,697,267 |
| Total net assets | <u>5,909,760</u> | <u>5,109,960</u> |
| Total liab. and net assets | <u>\$ 6,603,695</u> | <u>\$ 6,007,009</u> |

—Randy Matter, Controller

Through my Bible
in 3 years**December 1997**

1. 2 Peter 3:1-10
2. 2 Pet. 3:11-18
3. Jude 1-16
4. Jude 17-25
5. Daniel 1
6. Dan. 2:1-30
7. Dan. 2:31-49
8. Dan. 3
9. Dan. 4
10. Dan. 5
11. Dan. 6
12. Dan. 7
13. Dan. 8
14. Dan. 9:1-19
15. Dan. 9:20-27
16. Dan. 10:1-11:1
17. Dan. 11:2-20
18. Dan. 11:21-12:13
19. Psalm 139
20. Ps. 140, 141
21. Ps. 142, 143
22. Ps. 144
23. Ps. 145
24. Ps. 146
25. Ps. 147
26. Ps. 148-150
27. Revelation 1:1-8
28. Rev. 1:9-20
29. Rev. 2:1-7
30. Rev. 2:8-17
31. Rev. 2:18-29

Peter the Barber once asked Martin Luther how he, an ordinary kind of guy, could read the Bible and benefit from it.

Luther answered:

Ask yourself:

1. What does God tell me here?
2. What makes me glad?
3. What makes me sad?
4. What do I want to pray for?

Try it in your Bible reading.



Family life influences teens

Teenagers with positive, strong emotional relationships with their parents or teachers are much less likely to use drugs and alcohol, become sexually active, or engage in violent behavior, according to a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

The conclusions said that feeling loved, understood, and paid attention to by parents helps teens avoid high-risk behaviors regardless of whether the child is from a one-parent or two-parent household.

Although the study included interviews with 20,000 teenagers and 18,000 parents in their homes, it did not look directly at the role of peer pressure in teen decisions to use drugs, engage in sex, or take up smoking, but called into question the widespread belief that peer pressure is the most important factor in such decisions.

"There's been a pretty significant myth that peer groups are important and parents are not," said Robert William Blum of the University of Minnesota and one of the study's researchers.

"We've focused so tremendously on peer pressure and instituted so many things to deal with peer pressure," he added. "And what this study is saying is that family environment matters."

These are the first findings from a \$25 million federally financed study of 90,000 students in grades 7 through 12. Researchers expect to spend a decade analyzing all the results.

U.S. government confirms Christian persecution

Christians are being sold into slavery and forcibly converted to Islam in civil war-racked Sudan. Christians are not allowed to openly worship in Muslim Saudi Arabia. Christian homes and churches have been destroyed by "Muslim mobs" in Pakistan.

These examples of persecution came from the first-ever report on religious persecution by the U.S. State Department. The report summarized the state of Christian persecution around the world and the actions taken by the United States in response.

Congress required the report last year in the wake of reports of the growing persecution of Christians around the world.

The report is comprised of two parts: The first summarizes American efforts on behalf of religious liberty and human rights (not limited to religious or Christian persecution). The second draws heavily from State

Department human rights reports and input from aid agencies. It cites 78 nations as either actively persecuting Christians or imposing some form of legal restriction of religious belief or practice.

In the wake of this report, two senators introduced legislation that would impose economic and other sanctions on nations found to be persecuting Christians or other religious believers.

The Clinton administration opposes the bill, saying the measure could "seriously harm the very people it seeks to help" by prompting reprisals. They also felt it could hinder dialogue with nations deemed to be religious persecutors and harm relations with key allies who might also fall into that category.

Despite White House opposition, House and Senate Republican leaders say they are committed to passing such legislation.

Workplace religious freedom bill introduced in Senate

In August President Clinton issued guidelines that clarified how belief may be expressed by federal employees in federal workplaces.

In the wake of those guidelines, legislation designed to strengthen existing federal law guaranteeing religious freedom in the workplace has been introduced in the Senate.

The senators who are cosponsoring the bill said that The Workplace Religious Freedom Act of 1997 is "an important step toward restoring the original intent" of 1972 legislation requiring employers to accommodate their employees' religious practices,

unless doing so caused them "undue" financial hardship or difficulties.

Sens. John Kerry, D-Mass., and Dan Coats, R-Ind., said the 1972 legislation—an amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964—has been eroded by court decisions that have broadly interpreted the undue hardship clause.

The proposed law would change that clause to say "significant difficulty or expense," which would be based on a number of factors, including company size. The bill also gives employees additional flexibility to reschedule work hours to accommodate their religious practices.

Bulletin

BOARD

& NOTICES

To place an announcement, call 414/256-3231; FAX, 414/256-3899; <nl@sab.wels.net> Deadline is six weeks before publication date.

CHANGE IN MINISTRY

Pastors

Barenz, Mark S., from St. Mark, Lincoln, Neb., to St. Paul, Mount Calvary, Wis.
Bartsch, Michael P., from St. Stephen, Fall River, Wis., to Bulgaria
Bickel, Elton R., from Apostles, Temperance, Mich., to Trinity, Elkton, Mich.
Bratz, Dennis R., from Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee, Wis., to St. Peter, Kekoskee, Wis.
Ellenberger, Larry, to Holy Word, Austin, Tex.
Free, Gerald E., from Bethlehem, Hortonville, Wis., to retirement
Hennig, Richard F., from Good Shepherd, Jacksonville, Fla., to Calvary Academy, South Milwaukee, Wis.
Kuenzel, Karl E., to mission in Chili (ELS)
Pagel, Carl E., from St. Paul, Livonia, Mich., to Grace, St. Joseph, Mich.
Ruege, John A. Sr., to First English, DuPree, S.D. (additional call)
Stuebs, Ralph O., from Bethlehem, Urbana, Ill., to Grace, Kenton, Ohio
Wright, Joseph M., from St. John, Boyd, Minn., to Christ, Cambridge, Minn.
Zander, Mark F., from St. Paul, Naper, Neb., to St. Peter, Balaton, Minn.

Teachers

Ampe, Joyce, to St. Peter, Helenville, Wis.
Danner, Rachelle A., to Emanuel, West St Paul, Minn.
Fluegge, Terry J., to St. John, Baraboo, Wis.
Hackbarth, Jennifer L., to Grace, Waukesha, Wis.
Karpenko, Ann M., from St. John, Minneapolis, Minn., to Salem, Loretto, Minn.
Marten, Kathleen R., to Holy Trinity, Wyoming, Mich.
Nelson, Jon A., to St. Mark, Watertown, Wis.
Raleigh, Cheryl A., to Salem, Stillwater, Minn.
Scharp, Greta L., from St. Andrew, Chicago, Ill., to St. John, Milwaukee, Wis.

The synod administration building will close:

Nov. 27-28—Thanksgiving.
 Callers may leave voice mail messages, 414/256-3888; FAX, 414/256-3899

ANNIVERSARIES

Oconomoc, Wis.—St. Matthew (75). Nov. 2—God's grace in proclaiming his pure Word, noon dinner. Call ahead to attend dinner. 414/567-2418.
Buffalo Grove, Ill.—New Life (10). Nov. 9. Service, 9:30 AM; catered brunch and program at 10:45 AM. New Life, Twin Groves Jr. High School, 2600 N Buffalo Grove Rd, Buffalo Grove IL 60089; 847/520-9176.
Corvallis, Ore.—Beautiful Savior (25). Nov. 16. Service, 4 PM; meal, 5:30 PM. 2605 NW 13 St, Covallis OR 97330; 541/757-8953.
North Mankato, Minn.—St. Paul (75). Nov. 22,23—anniversary thanksgiving. Services on Saturday at 5:30 PM and Sunday at 8 and 10:30 AM. Lunch follows 10:30 AM services. 304 Monroe Ave, N Mankato MN 56003; 507/345-4939 for reservations.
Milwaukee, Wis.—Salem (150). Nov. 9—Kettle Moraine, Jackson, Wis., adult chorale. Services at 8 and 10:30 AM. 6814 N 107 St, Milwaukee WI 53224; 414/353-8141.

Greenfield, Wis.—St. Jacobi (125). Nov. 30, Dec. 1—reaffirmation of faith. Services at 8:15 and 10:45 AM on Sunday, 7 PM on Monday. 8605 W Forest Home Ave, Greenfield WI 53228; 414/425-3030.

Boulder, Colo.—Peace (20). Nov. 16. Service, 4 PM; dinner follows. 2790 Jay Rd, Boulder CO 80304; 303/444-7434.

COMING EVENTS

Women's retreat—Nov. 8. Trinity, Minocqua, Wis. Sue Bowman, 715/356-7542.

Concert—Lutheran Chorale. 3 and 7 PM, Nov. 30 at Atonement, Milwaukee.

Women's retreat—WELS/ELS Ladies' Retreat. Jan. 9-11, 1998, at Woodland's Lutheran Retreat Village, Monteverde, Fla. Judy Becker, 941/355-6591 or pager, 941/750-1061.

Women's retreat—Today's Christian Women's retreat. March 27-29, 1998. Lansing Sheraton Hotel, Lansing, Mich. Laurie, 248/391-1133.

Tour—hosted by the Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors. 10-day tour of the Holy Land. March 23-April 1, 1998. Lloyd Huebner, 414/677-5420 or Harris Kaesmeyer, 517/793-1020.

European choral/history tour—Sing the music of Renaissance and Baroque masters at the places where they lived and worked in England, Holland, and Germany. June 8-26, 1998. Roger Hermanson <hermanra-fac@mlc-wels.edu> or Mark Lenz <lenzmj-fac@mlc-wels.edu>, Martin Luther College, 1995 Luther Ct, New Ulm MN 56073; 1-800-686-4142.

NAMES WANTED

Benton Harbor, Mich.—former pastors, vicars, principals, teachers, students, and members of St. Matthew for 100th anniversary celebration. Thelma Stubelt, 6870 Meadowbrook Rd, Benton Harbor MI 49022; 616/944-1819; or Amy Brenner, 5966 Naomi Rd, Eau Claire MI 49111; 616/944-5040.

Watertown, Wis.—past members of St. Luke for 150th anniversary in 1998. Board of Outreach and Fellowship, St. Luke, 1509 S 3 St, Watertown WI 53094.

Carmel/Westfield/Zionsville/Noblesville/Fishers/NW Indianapolis, Ind.—Pastor George Ferch, 13461 Shakamac Dr, Carmel IN 46032; 317/571-0204; <gferch@in-motion.net>

Cary/Apex/Holly Springs/Garner/Durham/South Raleigh, N.C.—Pastor Michael Geiger, 1011-E Fox Hunt Ln, Raleigh NC 27615; 919/870-1082; <geigmich@aol.com>

Minot, N.D.—Students and Air Force personnel. Grace (WELS). Meets at New Hope Christian Center, 220 5 Ave NW, Minot ND 58703; 701/838-4280.

NEEDED

Hymnals—Large print copies of *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Pastor Roger Holtz, Good Shepherd (ELS), 1504 Vine, Bloomer WI 54724; 715/568-4265; <rogholtz@win.bright.net>

Furnishings—chairs, tables, lamps, coat rack, book shelves, and overhead projector for meeting room for a mission congregation ministry center. Jack Kelly, 812/232-7752 or 812/877-4141; <sun Kelly@scifac.indstate.edu>

Preacher—vacation in the Black Hills. Two nights free lodging at the Shady Rest Motel in exchange for conducting a Sunday service (vacancy pastor at Shepherd of the Hills, Custer, S.D.) 1-800-567-8259.

SERVICES

Yuma, Ariz.—Visitors coming to Yuma for the winter are invited to attend Prince of Peace, 2500 S 8 Ave, Yuma AZ 85364; 520/726-8716; <agumm@c2i2.com>

AVAILABLE

Organ—Biscuit two keyboard electronic organ. Free for cost of shipping. Milwaukee, Wis. Karen Schmidt, 414/677-4333.

Bibles and hymnals—12 KJV Bibles, 10 *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Free for cost of shipping. Christ, Menominee, Mich. 906/863-2119.

Copier—Sharp SF-7100. Free for cost of shipping. Emmanuel, Hudson, Wis. Pastor Tom Kutz, 715/386-9851.

Hymnals—*The Lutheran Hymnal*. Free for cost of shipping. Hope, Chino Valley, Ariz. Pastor Dave Karow, 520/708-0729; <djkarow@northlink.com>

Lights—four hanging sanctuary lights, traditional style. Perfect for small chapel. Free for cost of shipping. Mt. Calvary, Redding, Calif.; 916/221-2480. <RevJWP@aol.com>

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Yorba Linda, Calif.—Grace, 6550 Fairmont Blvd, Yorba Linda CA 92886; 714/779-2384; FAX, 714/779-2399.

Milwaukee, Wis.—Jesus Cares Ministries, Mission to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Milwaukee Federation, and Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries. 2949 N Mayfair Rd Ste 105, Milwaukee WI 53222; FAX, 414/259-8308. Phone numbers: Jesus Cares Ministries and MDHH, 414/259-0292; Milwaukee Federation, 414/259-0654; WLIM, 414/259-8122.

POSITION AVAILABLE

Professors—Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, under the auspices of the Southeastern Wisconsin District praesidium, is seeking faculty candidates for divine calls in the following disciplines: anthropology, art, biology, business, chemistry, communication, computer science, early childhood education, economics, education, English, finance, German, history, mathematics, music (instrumental), philosophy, physics, political science, psychology, sociology, Spanish, theatre.

Candidates should hold a doctorate or equivalent; doctoral students will be considered. Previous college or university teaching preferred. Active membership in a WELS or ELS congregation is required. Positions in all these disciplines may not be available immediately, but openings are anticipated in the next few years. Send names of qualified candidates to Dr. John E. Bauer, vice president of academic affairs, Wisconsin Lutheran College, 8800 W Bluemound Rd, Milwaukee WI 53226; 414/443-8816; FAX, 414/443-8514; <john_bauer@wlc.edu>

Assistant director of public relations—Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. Responsibilities include management of publications (heavy emphasis on writing), special events, and media and constituency relations. Candidates need a BA in English, journalism, or communication and at least three years of professional experience in public relations. Send resume and at least three writing samples to Vicki Hartig, Director of Public Relations, Wisconsin Lutheran College, 8800 W Bluemound Rd, Milwaukee WI 53226.

Pastors: serving God by serving us

Jack Callaway

As a WELS member, I am blessed with a church body that stands for the true doctrine of our Lord and tells me that I did not obtain this blessing on my own, but rather by my heavenly Father's loving hand.

As part of this blessing, God has raised up men to serve as shepherds—our pastors. They are blessings, chosen and sent by our Father to help sustain, feed, and nurture his sheep. When we consider our pastors and the services they provide, we thank God for them and the work they do as a sincere service to God.

Our pastor's (think of your own pastor) sincerity is humbling, his humility is inspiring, his joy is catching, and his patience is enduring.

He has a family he loves dearly and for which he provides a loving and secure home. He, like all of us, has a yard to take care of, cars to keep running, and children to help raise. In addition, he serves a dual parish. This means he has many people outside his family whom he cares about and for whom he expresses a sincere concern.

As in all churches, matters arise from day to day, such as sickness, deaths, finances, hurt feelings, and misunderstandings. Even with all these concerns, our pastor's greatest focus and joy is the spiritual health of the flock. He is tireless in his stand for the truth and faithful in delving into long hours of work on his sermons, catechism lessons,

meetings, organizational functions, hospital visits, and evangelism work.

Members call him in the evening with questions ranging from theological issues to "Do you know when our church directory will be delivered?" Pastor always makes us feel like our concerns are important (even when they aren't). He is always cheerful. He greets us with a smile, even when he feels bad, even when he is worn out.

**There are many in our church
but only one pastor. We can
show our appreciation by
supporting him.**

The greatest service our pastor does is preach God's Word and administer the Holy Sacraments. God blessed us by placing a servant of Jesus in our midst with a spirit of hard work, a dedication to the truth, and a cheerfulness that equates to patience and understanding. We are thankful for our pastor.

The next time your pastor seems distant, tired, or down, think of all the individual souls for whom he is responsible, especially their eternal salvation. Then add the problems of the sheep he is shepherding, his home life, all the day-to-day concerns that confront him, and Satan's attacks against him and the church. Rather than complain or misinterpret his mood, write him a note of

encouragement and thanks, ask if you can help with some task. Get involved with the church. Take some of the burden from his shoulders and pray, pray, pray for him.

Remember, our pastors are only human with human limitations. Sometimes burdens and workload can overwhelm. There are many in our church but only one pastor. We can show our appreciation by supporting him. Pastors are true blessings from God, sent to care for us, preach God's Word to us, and serve us with God's spiritual blessings.

We thank you, God, for our faithful pastors. We pray you will richly bless them and sustain them in your work here on earth. We pray that through your Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ, their labors will be exceedingly fruitful so you may be glorified. Show us where we may be of service to them in their service to us.

Jack Callaway is a member of Peace, Marshfield, Missouri.

Thoughts on capital punishment

Walter F. Beckmann

Ever since Cain killed Abel, accounts of violence and murder have filled the news. That's especially true in our nation—the Oklahoma City bombing, daily murders in big cities, school girls' bodies in a rural Virginia creek, homicides in your hometown.

The news also suggests how convicted killers should be punished. In the wake of Timothy McVeigh's trial, a poll asked, "Do you favor the death penalty for individuals convicted of serious crimes?" The results: 74 percent favored it, 20 percent opposed it. These results parallel the 76 percent of our states that have the death penalty on their books.

Opponents call the death penalty "barbaric" or "a thirst for blood." Others quote the Fifth Commandment, "You shall not kill." However, capital punishment did not start with vengeful barbarians, nor with some state legislature. God himself said, "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God has God made man" (Genesis 9:6).

Through sin, man lost the image of God. Through Christ, God restored it. Our life is a precious time of grace, a time to come to faith and thereby receive eternal life. God established capital punishment to protect our time of grace. In fact, when God gave civil laws to Israel, the punishment for what we call negligent homicide could be death.

When death penalty opponents invoke the Fifth Commandment, we note that God gave that commandment to individuals, not the government. He established the government to act as his agent of wrath and gave it the power of the sword to punish evil doers.

But, in Old Testament civil law God also made it possible for the death penal-

ty to be waived. He said "He may redeem his life by paying whatever is demanded" (Exodus 21:30). Although David deserved to die for his involvement in Uriah's death, God spared his life.

At present, about 24 percent of our states do not have the death penalty, and about that many more have not applied it in 20 years.

Is it our responsibility as a church body to demand that this be changed? No. The power of the sword is the God-given responsibility of the government. The church has a different sword, the sword of the Spirit—the Word of God. Our responsibility as a church is to teach people what the Word of God says so they will be informed when they vote.

We don't want the state to tell our church body how we are to baptize, and as a church body, we should not interfere with the state as it sheathes or unsheathes its God-given power of the sword.

We should be careful that we do not allow anger and revenge to motivate us when we speak in favor of capital punishment. God says that revenge belongs to him, not to us. He established the government as his impersonal institution for revenge so we wouldn't personally carry it in our hearts.

Finally, we should be concerned for the souls of those on whom the state carries out God's capital revenge. God sent his Son to save them. Jesus didn't interfere with the execution of two men convicted of serious crimes, but he assured the penitent one, "You'll be with me today in Paradise."

Even capital punishment should be carried out in the spirit of those familiar words, "God have mercy on your soul."

Walter Beckmann is pastor at Grace, Falls Church, Virginia.

The power of the sword is the God-given responsibility of the government, not the church.

ELCA expands ecumenical stance

An analysis of decisions made by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America regarding ecumenical proposals to the churchwide assembly this summer.

John F. Brug

The 1997 Church Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rendered a split decision on three historically significant ecumenical proposals.

The ELCA declared that the differences in the doctrine of justification between Catholics and Lutherans are no longer a cause for division or condemnation between the churches. The assembly also

agreed to full communion with three Reformed churches. It narrowly rejected an agreement on shared ministry with the Episcopal Church.

Declaration on justification

By a vote of 958-25 the assembly adopted a "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification," declaring that condemnations that Lutherans hurled at Roman Catholics during the 16th century concerning the key Lutheran doctrine of justification no longer apply to present Catholic teaching on this topic.

Lutherans have always insisted that justification is God's verdict of free forgiveness, which takes place outside of us. Catholics have insisted that good works are part of the process of justification. The declaration nevertheless asserts, "The understanding of the doctrine of justification set forth in this declaration shows that a consensus in the basic truths of the doctrine of justification exists between Lutherans and Catholics."

The document does not claim agreement on all aspects of justification but only a "consensus on basic truths." This consensus is that:

We confess together that all persons depend completely on the saving grace of God for their salvation (Pt. 19).

This, however, does not address the point of disagreement. Catholics

and Lutherans have always agreed that we are saved by grace. The disagreement has always been whether the grace by which our sins are forgiven is solely a verdict of God, which takes place outside of us, or if it includes ability that God puts into us, which we use to complete our justification.

Using language that skillfully blends both the Lutheran teaching and traditional Catholic theology, the joint declaration says:

We confess together that God forgives sin by grace and at the same time frees human beings from sin's enslaving power and imparts the gift of new life in Christ. When persons come by faith to share in Christ, God no longer imputes to them their sin and through the Holy Spirit effects in them an active love. These two aspects of God's gracious action are not to be separated, for persons are by faith united with Christ, who in his person is our righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30): both the forgiveness of sin and the saving presence of God himself (Pt. 22).

The Catholic understanding also sees faith as fundamental in justification. For without faith, no justification can take place. . . . The justification of sinners is forgiveness of sins

SUMMARY

The ELCA made three major ecumenical decisions at their churchwide assembly this fall:

1. The differences in the doctrine of justification between Catholics and Lutherans are no longer a cause for division or condemnation between the churches.

2. ELCA will be in full communion with three Reformed churches—the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ.

3. ELCA will not enter into full communion with the Episcopal Church at this time.

To learn about more differences between WELS and the ELCA, read *WELS and other Lutherans*, available from Northwestern Publishing House.

and being made righteous by justifying grace, which makes us children of God (Pt. 27).

Point 27 clearly permits the Catholic belief that justification is both the forgiveness of sins and the inner renewal of the sinner. It includes both being *declared* righteous and being *made* righteous. The joint statement thus is not a real resolution of the critical difference between the Lutheran and Catholic doctrines of justification, but an attempt to hide these differences.

Rome has made no change in its false doctrine of justification. The new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says:

Justification includes the remission of sins, sanctification, and the renewal of the inner man (Par. 2019).

No one can merit the initial grace which is at the origin of conversion. Moved by the Holy Spirit, we can merit for ourselves and others all the graces needed to attain eternal life (Par. 2027).

This is the same false doctrine that was condemned by the Lutheran Confessions in the 16th century. It still must be condemned today.

Roman Catholic approval will be required for the joint declaration to take effect. Approval by Rome, however, will not be a repudiation of the false teaching of Rome, which is affirmed by the new Catholic catechism, but an endorsement of a vague “consensus,” which hides the remaining critical differences between Catholic and Lutheran doctrine.

“Full communion” with Reformed churches

The assembly voted 839-193 to approve “full communion” with three Reformed churches—the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ. This declaration is not a plan to merge but commits the churches to exchanging pastors and sharing communion and mission work.

Opposition arose because the agreement ignores the difference between the Lutheran and Reformed understanding of the Lord’s Supper. Lutherans believe that Christ’s true body and blood are really present “in, with, and under” the bread and wine and are received by all communicants. The Reformed believe that in the Sacrament Christ is present only to believers by faith. Michael Rogness, an ELCA seminary professor, commented, “Our people realize those differences exist, but they don’t believe they are—in official language—church dividing, or in unofficial language, a big deal.” At Marburg, Luther thought the denial of the Real Presence was a “big deal” and refused fellowship with the Reformed. Unfortunately, the majority of American Lutherans no longer agree with Luther.

Rejection of Concordat with Episcopalians

A few minutes after the assembly had accepted full communion with the Reformed, a similar proposal to enter into full communion with the Episcopal Church failed when it fell six votes short of the two-thirds majority needed.

The main objection to the proposal was that it committed the

Lutheran church to the “historic episcopate” of the Episcopal Church. An opponent said, “I cannot support a document that tells us only bishops can ordain.” Rogness quoted the Concordat: “We agree that the threefold ministry of bishops, presbyters, and deacons in historic succession will be the future pattern of the one ordained ministry.” He observed, “With the concordat we become Episcopalians, and they remain Episcopalian.” Rogness said that would contradict previous actions of the ELCA that declared there would be one office of ordained ministry—pastors—and bishops would be pastors elected to offices of oversight in the church.

The assembly rejected an attempt to reconsider the vote, but resolved that “our church remains committed to the ultimate goal of full communion with the Episcopal Church and other churches.”

The narrow rejection of the agreement did not reflect great concern about the many doctrinal differences between Lutherans and Episcopalians, but rather a determination to preserve the ELCA arrangement for ministry, which was the only source of doctrinal controversy during the formation of the ELCA.

All three agreements are evidence that the ELCA is ready to abandon Lutheran doctrine for ecumenical compromise.

John Brug is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.

Send questions to Your question, please, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; FAX, 414/256-3899; <nl@sab.wels.net.>

Good works are the fruits of faith

Faith alone saves, yet faith without works is dead.

Mark E. Braun

A classic old paperback posed the question: Does the Bible Contradict Itself? Compare these two passages:

- “A man is justified by faith apart from observing the law” (Romans 3:28).
- “A person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone” (James 2:24).

Isn't that a contradiction?

Two different problems

It's always important to know not just what one says but who one's saying it to. Paul was talking to people who believed they could save themselves by their own good lives. They thought God accepts people by faith and works. Theirs was a denial that good works are the fruits of faith; they saw works as the basis for salvation.

James addressed a different problem. He was talking to people who believed that faith, even if it never produces good works, can still save. Theirs, too, was a denial that good works are the fruits of faith; they figured, works don't save you, so why do them?

Can such “faith” save you? That kind of “faith” is really no faith at all. Even devils have that kind of “faith.” They may say the right

things—“There is one God!” or, “Jesus is Lord!”—but for them it's just a dead recital of religious facts. Real faith is a living thing. It always produces good works.

Two different observers

A key to resolving this apparent contradiction lies a few verses before Paul's statement that we are justified by faith alone: “No one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law” (Romans 3:20). In God's sight, our works are never good enough. As Luther put it: “Our best and holiest deeds must fail. . . . Before you none can boasting stand.” The only way sinners hear “Not guilty” from a holy God is when God grants his righteousness as a gift—which is what he did in Jesus.

Real faith is a living thing. It always produces good works.

James, by contrast, was talking about being justified before other people. “Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.” Faith is in my heart. The only way my neighbor can see it is when it shows in how I live.

Before others, you and I are justified by works every day. People make up their minds about Christianity based on what

they see in us. Christians who live honest and faithful lives, who show kindness, who exercise self-control, “make the teaching about God our Savior attractive” (Titus 2:10). But when non-believers see Christians lie, steal, curse, or act selfishly, they're likely to conclude that Christianity is something they can easily do without.

Two different examples

James could hardly have chosen two more disparate figures to prove his point. Yet Abraham, “God's friend,” and Rahab, the ex-prostitute, both offer vivid examples.

Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness”—and it showed in his life. He moved his family to a strange land, became the father of a miracle baby, and, in the most agonizing test of his life, was willing to sacrifice his son at Mt. Moriah.

Convinced of God's power and mercy, Rahab risked her life to protect Israel's two spies. Later she married a man from Judah's tribe and became an ancestor of the Savior.

There's no contradiction. Faith alone saves, but real faith is never alone.

real faith for real life
james

Mark Braun is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee.



Re: the article on Project Share [Aug.]. I appreciate the article because I have learned the joy of spreading the gospel to prison inmates.

My father was a pastor and for a time he would visit several inmates in the state penitentiary. Every once-in-a-while I would be allowed to accompany him. It was a wonderful experience to see the gospel working in the hearts of the prisoners.

I applaud the men and women who work in Project Share. They bring hope, joy, and, most important, the message of our Savior. For that I thank them.

*Jonathan D. Fischer
Wilmot, Wisconsin*

Re: "Being a child of the King" [Sept.] by **John Parlow**. In his article, Parlow does his duty, like a watchman of Ezekiel, to warn us of a present danger. *Omphaloskepsis* (contemplation of the navel or "navel gazing") is the height of self-absorption. He properly warns us that we should cast off the influences of our egocentric, narcissistic society so as not to infect our own lives and congregations, but instead imitate the humility of Jesus Christ. This warning is timely and apt.

I do, however, disagree in part with the statement, "They accused him of heresy, but never arrogance." Jesus was never arrogant, but he was falsely accused of what the unbelieving high priest and Sanhedrin considered to be supreme arrogance—claiming to be the Son of God.

*Oswin W. Herrmann
Kansas City, Missouri*

This letter is in response to "Appearances" [Sept.] The attitude that WELS is a bit pharasaical is one I held and have heard from others. In my view it is a self-destructive attitude that hurts those who hold it more than anyone else.

This is not a characteristic of WELS churches only. I have not yet spoken to a person of a different denomination who doesn't admit to a strong adherence to "pet" doctrines.

But before we can address the pharasaical perception on a corporate level, we must deal with it on an individual level.

Our God is a God of justice and mercy. To the human mind these concepts can be mutually exclusive. Not to God. He loves those of other denominations, without bending his standard of justice. The challenge for us is to find a way to do as he does—love without a sacrifice of integrity. It works. He promised. Too bad I haven't figured out how yet.

Thank you for addressing this issue in your column.

*Erika Robinson
Gloucester, Ontario, Canada*

Let me commend you, and all the writers, on the September NL. I appreciated "Appearances."

We do need to be aware of how we come off with others. We should live at peace with others, even those who have a negative opinion of us. We should make the best appearance we can in accord with truth. Of course, we must also be aware that even Jesus did not make a good impression on some, and those who have a poor attitude toward our Lord will not likely think fondly of us if we are following him.

Thanks for putting a good construction on an unfriendly letter. It was, to my mind, more effective

than a strictly doctrinal presentation of our "position" on something.

*Gene Hartzell
Lakeside, Arizona*

I liked your article entitled "Appearances." I'm thankful every day that my denomination is doctrinally sound.

Six years ago I began to realize the false teachings of my church. I had grown up in that denomination and loved it dearly. It took me a year to leave. At that time I had only heard of Lutherans and knew nothing of WELS. The Lord led me to a WELS church not half a mile away from the church where I was a member.

The pastor was patient as I debated with him during adult instruction classes. I'm thankful to God that he never wavered or watered down any teachings.

Recently my husband took a job in a new city. What a blessing it is to know that I don't have to search for a church again. I am confident that the WELS church in my community is teaching the Scriptures in their truth and purity. Thanks be to God!

*Sara Doyle
Westminster, Colorado*

rē·li·giōn

Defining religion

Apostles' Creed: A statement of the basic beliefs of Christianity. Trinitarian in nature, this creed developed in the early church as a baptismal creed and reached its present form about the seventh century. There is no historical evidence to support the tradition that it was composed by the 12 apostles with each contributing an article. We commonly recite the Apostles' Creed in non-Communion services.

Road rage



Gary P. Bauml is editor of Northwestern Lutheran and WELS Director of Communications.

God has given us what we need to control our anger and calm our hearts. It's the peace, unlike the world's peace, that comes from Jesus.

Do you find yourself frowning a lot these days? Do you feel a pressure that builds up inside and begs for release? Do you wonder if there is any sanity left in the world?

I mean, where does it end? The latest is the so-called "road rage" that gives new meaning to the phrase "unsafe at any speed." You better not accidentally cut someone off or, worse, have a fender-bender. That person just might pull out a gun and shoot you.

No, I don't really expect to encounter that extreme reaction any more than you do. But what is behind the increasing occurrences? Where is all the anger coming from?

To find the answer, look inward. Think back. Someone, even someone you love dearly, did something that made you want to scream—maybe you did. Traffic jams and woeful workloads! Broken vases, broken promises, broken spirits! Fires, floods, foolhardiness! Headaches, heartaches, muscle aches! Do you grumble unmentionable epithets at careless drivers and other bunglers?

We have our moments, don't we? And our increasingly fast-paced world makes them come more frequently. Instant coffee, instant gratification, instant communication, instant rage!

I'm not writing to say we can make all the anger go away. It's part of the natural sinful condition. It drove Cain against Abel. It drives us against whoever gets in the way. It's not at all new, just more open

and unfettered than we're accustomed to seeing.

But it doesn't need to control us. God has given us what we need to control our anger and calm our hearts. It's the peace, unlike the world's peace, that comes from Jesus. It's the peace that surpasses human understanding.

That peace begins at Jesus' cross. Much, if not most, of our anger comes not from disappointment with others as from disappointment with ourselves. We have fallen short of our goals, short of our expectations, short of being fully satisfied with ourselves.

I'm angry with me! But you get the brunt of it.

And that's because we have fallen short, in fact, entered life inherently short, of God's expectations of us.

My sin breeds anger and aims it at me and at others indiscriminately.

At the cross we find forgiveness for all the shortcomings and a heaven full of blessings to make us content and at peace. We learn that the forgiveness won there extends also to every rage-filled driver. We see that the things that make us angry are inconsequential next to the eternal life won for us by Jesus.

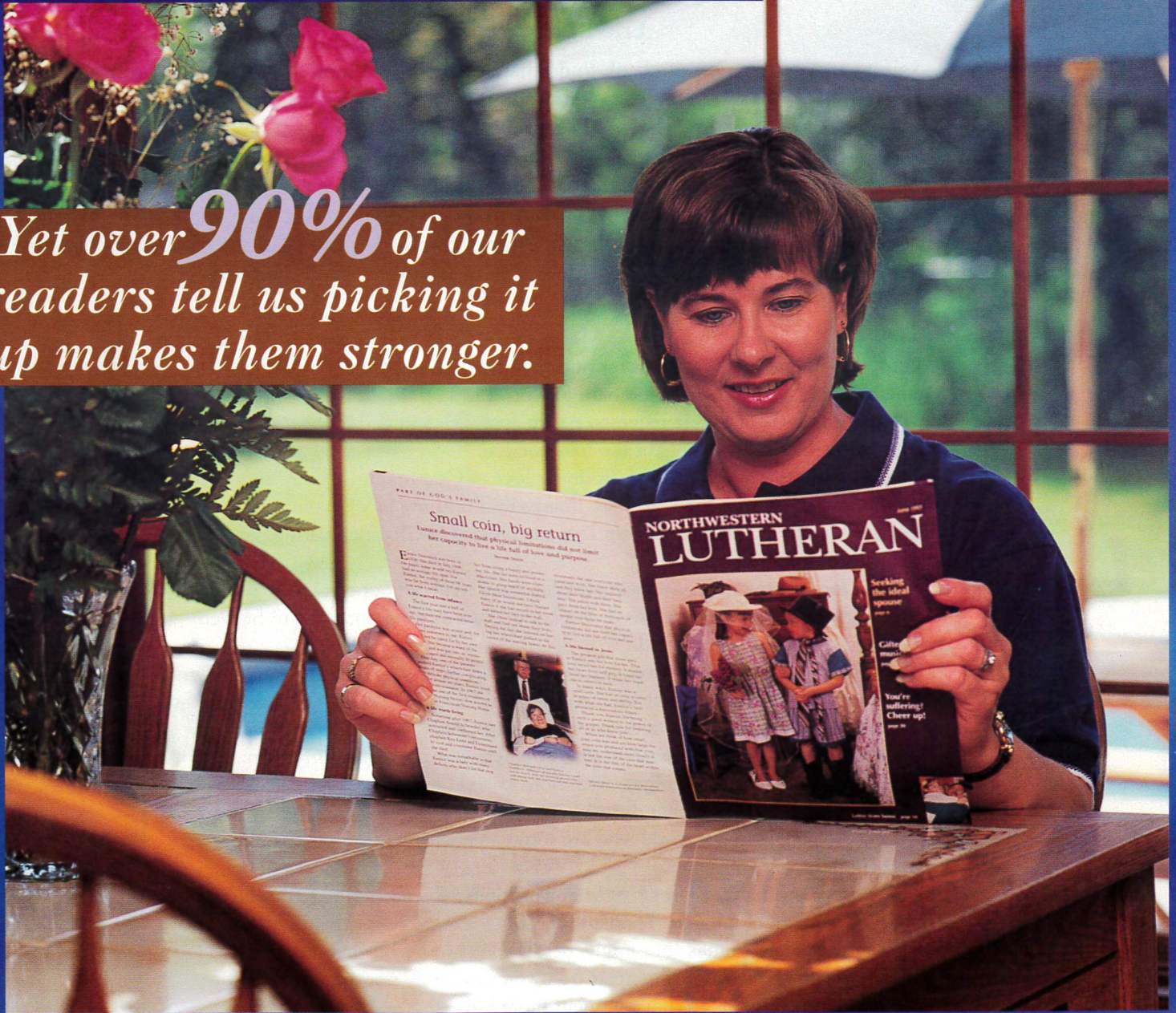
So we find peace, and we learn to live at peace. Anger still rages down the road. But when it confronts us, we can turn from it and draw instead on the peace that belongs to us in Jesus.

And we can stop frowning.

Gary P. Bauml

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Thanksgiving for nothing

Nothing bad is just as much to be thankful for as something good.

Eric R. Hartzell

Sometimes people say it sarcastically: "Thanks for nothing!"

It would be a shame if someone would say that to the Lord who has given him everything. Is there a person so bereft of blessings that he would say this Thanksgiving, "Thanks for nothing?" It would take

a lot of cheek to do that. Perhaps there are some poor and miserable souls who would murmur it under their breath.

We don't thank God for nothing. We thank him for something . . . for many, many things. Pilgrim forefathers wanted to do that. Our tables

and domiciles and wardrobes are far richer than our forefathers' were.

We truly have reason for saying, "Thanks for something. . . . Thanks for everything!"

But there is a possible way to say, "Thanks for nothing" and give God praise for it.

Lord, this Thanksgiving, thanks for nothing being too great for you to do. Jeremiah could say, "Nothing is too hard for you" (32:17). It is still that way. We have big needs and impossible requests. As we approach you with these, we are thankful that nothing is too big or too hard for you.

Thanks for nothing separating us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. In a time when the love of many is growing cold, thanks that nothing blocks your warm and supportive love to us. Thanks for your love manifested in Christian caring people who make our lives rich.

Thanks for nothing necessary being hidden from us about our salvation. We know you give us everything we need. We know the way from our town to heaven as we listen to you and your Word.

Thanks for nothing lacking from our lives that we need according to your mercy and to your wisdom. Thanks that we can still say with King David, "Our cups run over," and you still provide for us tables in the presence of our enemies.

Thanks for nothing on our borders that threaten us with war and invasion. Thanks for nothing to fill our nights with horrors and our days with terrors. Even as we thank you for nothing that disturbs our national peace and tranquillity, we pray for those people in our world who are tormented with attack and ongoing war. Give them peace.

Thanks for nothing that forbids us from worshiping you according to our beliefs. Thanks for freedom of religion. Thanks especially for the true freedom that true religion brings when it offers your forgiveness through Jesus' life and death.

Thanks for the knowledge that apart from you we can do nothing. Thanks for showing us our "nothing," so that we might more fully trust you for everything.

Forgive us when we think we have nothing to thank you for. Thanks that even our terrible preoccupation with having nothing does not stop your love for us. Your mercies are new to us every morning. Even to the ungrateful and the unkind.

Forgive us when nothing crosses our lips or hearts in the way of thanks as we continue to enjoy life in the richest nation and the richest time the world has ever seen. And if we don't know this, then forgive us for our terrible and willful blindness.

Finally, nothing bad is just as much to be thankful for as something good.